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Monday, 17 October 2002, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Belinga Eboutou	(Cameroon)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 10 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1132).

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The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Israel. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): Israel feels compelled to take the floor in the light of the numerous charges, made in the course of this debate, that the Security Council has adopted a double standard with regard to Israel's compliance with Council resolutions.

In fact, those statements are the strongest proof that there is indeed a double standard: one directed against Israel. What else could explain such a deliberate blindness to the fundamental differences between Iraq's defiance of the Council and Israel's commitment to a peaceful settlement of conflict with its neighbours? What else could explain the failure to see any distinction between binding resolutions, adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter — resolutions that set out specific actions to be taken by Iraq, independent of the actions of any other party — and interdependent recommendations or statements of principle, adopted under Chapter VI, that are designed to move all the parties forward in the Middle East? The Charter of the United Nations is itself founded on the understanding that different situations and disputes require different responses and that not every conflict requires identical action. The distinction between resolutions adopted under Chapter VI and those adopted under Chapter VII recognizes that in certain cases the Council might wish to express itself in the form of a recommendation or in a broadly outlined statement of principles, rather than an explicit demand of one particular Member State.

What else but a double standard could possibly blur the gaping distinctions between Iraq, which has repeatedly violated and flouted the resolutions of the Council, and Israel, which has repeatedly taken significant steps, at considerable risk to its own security, to implement the Council's will? Indeed, the principles set out by the Council in resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) provided the basis for Israel's peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, and will hopefully enable us to reach peace with our other neighbours as well. All parties accepted those resolutions as the basis of the Madrid Peace Conference. They also provided the basis for our peacemaking with the Palestinians, for our mutual recognition, for the Oslo accords and for nearly a decade of peace negotiations. Those negotiations broke off as a result of the decision by the Palestinian side to revert to a strategy of violence and terrorism and as a result of its rejection, both in word and deed, of the right of States in the region to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, as required by resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In May 2000, Israel fully implemented its obligations under Security Council resolution 425 (1978), a fact that has been confirmed by the Secretary-General and endorsed by the Council. Despite that, Hizbullah terrorists have continued to launch cross-border attacks against Israel. The group has abducted three Israeli soldiers and one civilian, jeopardized security and stability in the area and threatens to provoke a broader regional confrontation. These illegal and dangerous activities are carried out in blatant violation of resolution 425 (1978) and with the ongoing support of the Government of Syria, which is itself a member of the Council, and the acquiescence of the Government of Lebanon.

Israel has also taken significant steps to implement the resolutions adopted by the Council since September 2000. Following the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002), Israel has gradually withdrawn its troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, successfully negotiated a peaceful end to the stand-off at the Church of the Nativity and redeployed our forces to the perimeter of population centres, in the hope that reciprocal Palestinian measures called for in the resolution would follow. But despite the call on the Palestinian Authority to adhere to a meaningful ceasefire and to end all acts of violence, terror and incitement, it did none of those things. Similarly, the recently adopted resolution 1435 (2002) placed obligations on both parties, including a call upon the Palestinian Authority to end all acts of violence, terror and incitement, and to bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts. The Palestinian Authority has thus far refused to live up to its obligation to arrest and prosecute terrorists and has thereby forced Israel to take actions to protect its citizens. In short, these obligations were totally ignored by the Palestinian Authority.

Unlike resolutions concerning Iraq, the Council's resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict do not envision Israeli actions without reciprocal commitment

and implementation by other parties to the dispute. They are part and parcel of a number of interdependent actions aimed at ending violence and terrorism and returning the parties to a political process. They cannot be compared to resolutions adopted under Chapter VII, which address the threat posed by the aggressive intentions of one regime to both the region and the world.

But beyond all that lies a more significant, and indeed more fundamental, distinction between Iraq and Israel. Israel is a country confronting the daily threat of terrorist attacks against its civilians, as well as repeated threats to destroy it, including threats from remote neighbours like Iran and Iraq. Are we to forget that just months before the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein threatened to "completely burn half of Israel", and that in the course of that war 39 Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Israeli cities without any provocation?

Is there a double standard, as certain Member States have alleged? There is a simple test. Take two States, one a dictatorship and serial violator of Council resolutions and human rights that is dedicated to the acquisition of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and fighting for regional domination; the other is a democracy upholding the principles of the rule of law and freedom of speech, a people whose survival has been tested for decades but who are still committed to peace, both for themselves and for future generations in the Middle East.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a serious one, and deservedly a source of international concern. But the cause of peace in the Middle East is not served by the charges we have heard in the course of this debate, nor is it served by false comparisons and deliberate obfuscation intended not to foster constructive action, but rather to prevent it. We cannot lose sight of the fact that the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East is only possible through both sides fulfilling their obligations and negotiating the terms of a final settlement in an atmosphere of partnership and cooperation. We hope that other Member States will do their utmost to help create such an atmosphere.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Costa Rica. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Stagno (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Several member States of the Rio Group have already spoken in this open meeting of the Security Council on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and two additional non-members of the Council will speak later. I shall therefore limit myself, in my capacity as the acting secretary of the Rio Group, to highlighting some of the principles of greatest importance to the members of the Group.

The members of the Rio Group, fully committed to multilateralism and to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations as basic rules of conduct in international relations, reiterate their confidence in multilateral mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The members of the Rio Group confirm their confidence that, in the face of the topic under debate in this public meeting, the Security Council will ensure respect for the principles and norms of international law. Likewise, the members of the Rio Group are fully certain that the Council will apply all necessary measures and use all appropriate means available in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to induce Iraq to comply with its resolutions, safeguarding the interests of the international community.

The resolutions of the Security Council must be complied with as provided by the Charter. We cannot permit any excuses of any nature in the fulfilment of that obligation. Therefore, the Rio Group calls for full and immediate compliance by Iraq with the resolutions pertaining to disarmament of its weapons of mass destruction.

The Rio Group urges Iraq to cooperate without conditions or restrictions with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) in accordance with resolution 1284 (1999), the other relevant resolutions adopted by this organ, the practical agreements on resumption of inspections agreed upon by the Government of Iraq, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and UNMOVIC in Vienna on 1 October 2002, and other measures that this Council may so adopt.

The Rio Group stresses its full support for the work of Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the Commission, and his technical team. We note that the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Commission depend upon its impartiality, in keeping with paragraph 6 of resolution 1284 (1999). The Rio Group calls on the Security Council to strengthen UNMOVIC in order

to permit the mission to verify the existence of weapons of mass destruction on the Iraqi territory and, should they be found, to ensure their destruction.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Rio Group, I wish to express our satisfaction for the convening of this public meeting of the Council that makes it possible for Member States to express their opinions and views on a situation that is of crucial importance in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Mexico. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President of the Security Council for holding this debate, which bears witness to the Council's commitment to transparency. I also wish to express my country's support for the text read out a moment ago by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Rio Group.

Mexico reiterates its deepest commitment to the primacy of the United Nations with respect to the maintenance of world peace, and we repeat our conviction as regards the validity of the collective system of international security. The lofty responsibility that world public opinion and international community place upon the members of the Security Council is to maintain and restore international peace and security through the adoption of multilateral actions that are timely and effective in the solution of conflicts. Therefore, the legitimacy and credibility of this collective-security system fundamentally lie in the decisions of the Council being in keeping with the Charter and international law.

Mexico has firmly condemned, as have a large majority of nations, the continued non-compliance by the Government of Iraq with the international obligations imposed upon it by the Security Council. Our country considers that its failure to observe the resolutions adopted with regard to disarmament and to renouncing the use of weapons of mass destruction under Chapter VII of the Charter for more than a decade represents a potential threat to peace and regional stability.

Therefore we cannot fail to recognize that there has been non-compliance with United Nations resolutions in other situations, moments and latitudes. Mexico thus reiterates once again that it is important for the Government of Iraq to comply immediately, unconditionally and without restrictions with all Security Council resolutions with regard to disarmament and renunciation of the use of weapons of mass destruction.

As is well known, Mexico has always upheld the necessity of achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In keeping with that position, Mexico addresses an appeal to Iraq to accept, by actions, the inspection activities in order to ensure the destruction, removal or neutralization under international supervision of all chemical, biological and nuclear weapons that it may have under its control. We are convinced that the acceptance by the Government of Iraq of the return of inspectors to its national territory, unconditionally, immediately and without restriction, constitutes a first step towards restoring confidence between the United Nations and that country, in addition to its fully complying with its international obligations with respect to disarmament and renunciation of the use of weapons of mass destruction.

The least that the international community can expect is that Iraq will cooperate in all aspects without subterfuge or pretext, at all times and in all places, with both UNMOVIC and IAEA, so that we can be in a position to reliably determine that Iraq does not posses the type of weapons which it renounced as part of the conditions laid down in resolution 687 (1991), or that it is not in a position to use such weapons.

In this process, the Security Council must preserve its authority to determine the composition, mandate and rules of operation of the inspection teams and, in general, the supervision of the implementation of the enforcement measures adopted pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter. Similarly, UNMOVIC must preserve its identity and independence as a subsidiary organ of the Security Council, and the inspectors will have to act in accordance with United Nations regulations. Thus, the militarization of inspections could prove to be counterproductive, since it would have the potential to generate situations of confrontation or other kinds of unforeseen incidents. Furthermore, this would constitute a deplorable and dangerous precedent in international practice. Mexico believes that the inspection missions should not foresee having armed escorts or anticipate the assistance of

representatives of the permanent members of this Council. We do not consider it appropriate that the inspections regime should be determined exclusively by the five permanent members, since the inspectors will have the obligation to report to the Council as a whole.

In my country's opinion, the Council's determination should be based on two essential conditions: first, a reliable assessment of Iraq's actual military capacity, as well as of its intentions to use that weaponry or the capacity of terrorist groups to gain access to it; and secondly, the agreement of members of the Council and of other involved nations on the measures to be adopted.

The Security Council cannot renounce the responsibilities imposed on it by the United Nations Charter in the maintenance of international peace and security, nor can it disregard its competence to determine the existence of a threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, Mexico supports a two-stage action of the Security Council.

The first of these two stages would be the establishment, under a new resolution, of a revised system of inspections in Iraq and of the conditions necessary to ensure that the inspection missions meet with no obstacle. The second stage would be triggered by Iraq's non-compliance with that resolution. In that event, if it were to occur, the Security Council will have to determine, on the basis of UNMOVIC and IAEA reports, whether the non-compliance constitutes a threat to international peace and security and to decide on the measures to be adopted, preferably unanimously, including the possible use of force.

In any consideration of the latter issue, the Security Council must establish clear criteria guaranteeing the conditions of proportionality, immediacy and necessity that must be present in any legitimate use of force. We nurture the hope that the incipient signs of an agreement will emerge, enabling us — as the Secretary-General has called for — to preserve the Council's unity. Accordingly, we would view favourably acceptance of action in two stages, such as that which I have described.

Mexico reiterates its willingness to pursue constructive cooperation in the work of the Council on this question, convinced of the need to exhaust multilateral efforts to reach a comprehensive, peaceful and definitive settlement.

Mexico will continue supporting the efforts pursued in the framework of the United Nations, with full respect for the powers of the Security Council, to resolve a grave problem that has faced the international community as a whole for more than decade: the continued non-compliance of the Government of Saddam Hussein with its international obligations under the Charter of our Organization.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to express to you, Sir, our appreciation of your efforts to convene this meeting.

We also wish to offer Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations and Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, our deep thanks for his call on the Security Council to convene this general debate on the question of Iraq. We believe that this debate is timely, especially given the increased talk of grave developments in Iraq in particular and the region in general.

We have listened carefully yesterday and today to all the statements made before the Council. In their entirety, they have conveyed the urgency of settling the Iraqi question by peaceful means and in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and with international law. In this regard, we are pleased to express our satisfaction at the assertion by most delegations of the need to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity and the unity of its people.

In his statement to the General Assembly on 15 September, Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, defined Syria's clear position on developments in the Iraqi situation. He stated:

> "The international community is committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. We cannot recall anyone doubting that commitment. We also stress that it is the right of the Iraqi people alone to decide their future without any interference in their internal affairs. It is the duty of all Members of our Organization to commit themselves to the implementation of United Nations resolutions. In keeping with that commitment, Syria supports the resumption of dialogue between Iraq and the Secretary-General with the objective of reaching a political solution that meets the requirements of the Security Council and that grants Iraq hope of peace,

> security and the lifting of the sanctions imposed on it, especially as Iraq has officially recognized the State of Kuwait and its international borders." (*A/57/PV.8, p. 13*)

The Arab Summit convened in Beirut and the Ministerial Meeting held in Cairo a few weeks ago affirmed their rejection of any military attack on Iraq. Syria is pleased whenever certain States declare their commitment to resorting to international legitimacy to solve pending problems between the United Nations and Iraq. Syria encourages and supports this approach, because it is the real guarantee of maintaining international peace and security in spite of our bitter feeling at the double standard used in dealing with Security Council resolutions. However, we continue to call on Iraq to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including those relevant to the return of inspectors to Iraq.

At the same time, we must recall the need to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), especially its paragraph 14, which calls for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Serious developments in recent weeks have attracted the interest of the international community as they may be conducive to reaching the required solution guaranteeing the implementation of Security Council resolutions on Iraq.

In Vienna on 30 September and 1 October, Mr. Hans Blix, the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, and Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), met with an Iraqi delegation. A constructive and successful debate was held on the practical arrangements for the return of United Nations inspectors to Iraq.

Reports and statements by Messrs. Blix and ElBaradei describe this meeting as successful, since it proved possible to achieve a mutual understanding on the practical arrangements for the work of the inspectors in Iraq.

Furthermore, the Iraqi side displayed the necessary flexibility and consented to the facilities requested by the representatives of the United Nations. The letters exchanged between Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei on the one hand, and Iraqi officials on the other hand, made it clear that the Iraqi side has endorsed all the understandings achieved.

Iraq displayed its readiness to accept the inspectors as of 19 October. Syria and other States have affirmed, during all the debates held in the Security Council, the utmost importance of benefiting immediately from such positive developments, calling for the dispatch of inspectors to Iraq promptly so that they can resume their work without delay, especially since the Council has been calling, for the last four years, for the return of inspectors to Iraq.

If we take into account the accomplishments achieved during the previous phases of inspection and the conclusions of the Arab Summit in Beirut and Iraq's expression of its will to return the Kuwaiti national archives and to find a mechanism that is now under discussion to solve the question of Kuwaiti prisoners, through the efforts to be undertaken by Mr. Yuli Vorontsov, the High-level Coordinator, we could say that the goal of closing the entire Iraq file in the Security Council is now within reach.

The Security Council during this period has witnessed consultations and discussions on the next step in the work of the Council as regards Iraq. In the context of our understanding of the developments we referred to, Syria believes that the basic task now is to preserve as much as possible unity of action in the Council and unity of position in support of the task of the inspectors.

We have declared on more than one occasion that there is no justification to sacrifice the unity of action in the Council, especially since Iraq has fulfilled all the requirements of the practical arrangements needed by the inspectors. Also, the questions raised by Mr. Blix in his meeting with the Security Council and the consultations last Tuesday can be solved in the context of the great flexibility displayed by the Iraqi side and in the context of the mutual wish of all sides to scrupulously implement relevant Security Council resolutions on Iraq. We must recall that escalating the tone of military aggression against Iraq and beating the drums of war do not serve the principles and purposes to which we have agreed in the United Nations Charter.

The founding of the United Nations in the wake of the Second World War aimed at establishing a world of peace and security. In no way can we accept an unwarranted war whose victims will be mainly innocent civilians.

Also, the repercussions of such wars will be devastating to Iraq in particular and will increase

extremism and its grave consequences in a turbulent area because of events in the occupied territories and Israel's flagrant defiance of relevant Security Council resolutions.

We would like to affirm the need for goodwill in dealing with the Iraq issue, especially since the Security Council has not taken any action to mitigate the severe effects of the sanctions imposed on Iraq, in spite of the progress in the destruction of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in the previous inspection phases.

Most delegations that have addressed this meeting have affirmed the need to implement Security Council resolutions without double standard, in particular not excluding Israel from the implementation of Security Council resolutions. Unlike the distortion practised by the representative of Israel, who spoke just a little while ago, in his attempt to distort the Charter, we affirm that Article 25 of the Charter calls on all States to implement Security Council resolutions and that all Council resolutions are binding and must be implemented. For the first time we hear about resolutions adopted by the Council that are mere recommendations or resolutions of a different nature. This is distortion. All Security Council resolutions are binding on all Members.

As for Israel, which has attempted to avoid the implementation of these resolutions for more than five decades, it must not be allowed to shirk its responsibility to implement relevant Security Council resolutions. What is truly strange about the Israeli logic is the talk about democracy while Israel is practising various kinds of murder and destruction in the occupied Arab territories. Is there a new concept called the democracy of occupation? Or is there a new logic regarding democratic occupation? This is a distortion. And this is clowning before this Council. It is unacceptable clowning. The representative of Israel spoke about South Lebanon. However, he forgot to mention Israel's twenty-year occupation of South Lebanon in flagrant defiance of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Had it not been for the sacrifices of the Lebanese national resistance, Israel would not have withdrawn. The other fact the Israeli representative failed to mention is the existence of scores of Lebanese prisoners, kidnapped by Israel from their homes and families, their mosques and from the streets and villages of South Lebanon. Obfuscation of facts will not serve the representative of Israel, because the facts are known to all members of the Council. Israel should recommit itself to the peace process and put an end to its occupation of the occupied Arab territories. That is the only solution that will achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Finally, we must affirm that the Iraqi people have suffered long enough from the effects of the embargoes and sanctions imposed upon Iraq for more than eleven years. These people have not seen any light at the end of this long dark tunnel of suffering, death and destruction. Will our current open debates in the Council over the next few days define the next step needed to embark on a phase of peace, hope and security for the Iraqi people, the region and the entire world? This is the challenge for us all. Let us work towards achieving peace instead of waging war, and let us work towards the implementation of all Security Council resolutions in order to achieve peace and security for all.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): You were right, Sir, to schedule this debate. The United Kingdom was one of the first to call for it. The Council needs to hear the voice of the wider membership, particularly when we are on the edge of decisions that could make the difference between war and peace.

It is a debate, clearly, that is about more than Iraq. The delegation and I have been listening carefully to it. The issues in our minds, whether we all refer to them or not, go much wider: the security of the whole neighbourhood of Iraq; the reinforcement of our collective effort to eliminate terrorism; justice for Palestine and security for Israel within the law; the role of the Security Council when serious matters of national security are before its members and the overall effectiveness of the United Nations itself.

I wish to be very clear. The United Kingdom's firm objective is the complete disarmament of Iraq in the area of weapons of mass destruction, by peaceful means. I repeat, our first preference is a peaceful solution to the current crisis surrounding Iraq. Ensuring that there is such a solution lies in the hands of Iraq.

In 1991, following the Gulf War, the Security Council set out the conditions governing the ceasefire between Iraq and the international coalition. Sadly, over eleven years later, Iraq remains in material breach of these obligations. We all know of the myriad ways in which Iraq sought, almost immediately after

inspections began, to frustrate inspections and intimidate inspectors.

We all know of the succession of allegedly final declarations submitted by Iraq after inspectors discovered some new incriminating fact or evidence. We all know how Iraq tried to limit and hinder inspections to the extent that in August 1998 the then head of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) said it was impossible for him to do his job. We all know of the outstanding weapons of mass destruction for which UNSCOM was unable to account. We all know of the multiple warnings sent to Iraq in resolution after resolution and presidential statement after presidential statement.

No shadow of a doubt remains that Iraq has defied the United Nations - not any particular Member State, the United Nations – over the whole of this period. As Prime Minister Blair has said

> "it is not that for 10 years Saddam Hussein has not been a problem, he has been a problem throughout the last 10 years. What has changed is first, that the policy of containment isn't any longer working, certainly without a massive change in the way that the regime is monitored and inspected; and secondly, we know from 11 September that it is sensible to deal with these problems before, not after."

Iraq could have invited the inspectors back without conditions at any time in the last few years. Sanctions could have been lifted and Iraqis restored to a normal life. They are a talented and spirited people; but they have been betrayed and stunted by a Government unworthy of them. Only Baghdad's insistence on retaining weapons of mass destruction capability has blocked that path of good sense and humanity. Only under the recent intense diplomatic pressure, and particularly the threat of military action, has the Iraqi Government's letter of 16 September 2002 emerged.

These Iraqi words, while necessary, are of themselves not enough. We remain deeply perturbed by evidence that Iraq believes it can hide its weapons of mass destruction rather than declare them, that it can again fool the inspectors and play games with them. The United Kingdom analysis, backed up by reliable intelligence, indicates that Iraq still possesses chemical and biological materials, has continued to produce them, has sought to weaponize them, and has active military plans for the deployment of such weapons. The United Kingdom analysis, backed up by reliable intelligence, shows that Iraq has in recent years tried to buy multiple components relevant to the production of a nuclear bomb. The United Kingdom analysis, backed up by reliable intelligence, points to the retention of extended-range missiles and to the employment of hundreds of people in projects to develop weapons with a range of over 1,000 kilometres that could carry both weapons of mass destruction and conventional warheads.

It would be an abdication of responsibility to ignore this challenge to the international community. We cannot afford to bury our heads in the sand and pretend the problem does not exist. We cannot accept the Iraqi Government's word at face value, knowing what we know.

We wish to see the Security Council, which Iraq has been defying for so long, express its will and its unity in a clear, strong resolution. That resolution must give the regime in Baghdad an unequivocal choice: complete weapons of mass destruction disarmament and normal membership of the international community, or refusal and the inevitable consequences. The United Kingdom has made it clear to Iraq, privately at a senior official level, that this choice is being offered genuinely. It represents a single, final chance for Iraq. If this is understood, and if the Council keeps its nerve, then maybe there is a prospect that Iraq will finally comply with its obligations and that military action can be averted. If we fail to send that tough signal, we shall be ignoring the realities. The weaker we collectively appear, the more probable it is that military action will be the outcome.

An essential component of this message is to ensure that inspections — United Nations inspections — are effective. That means giving the inspectors the penetrating strength to ensure the successful weapons-of-mass- destruction disarmament of Iraq. We cannot afford a return to the ambiguous modalities and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) of the past; we cannot afford exceptions to unconditional, unrestricted and immediate access; we cannot afford to have inspectors again standing by helplessly while crucial documents are burned or while convoys leave from the back door as inspectors arrive at the front; we cannot afford interviews compromised by intimidating minders. The recent Iraqi letters on practical arrangements, the language of which brings

back the obfuscations of the past, reinforce the need for strengthened inspections and for practical arrangements to be made legally binding. Stronger inspections will be crucial to ensuring that all countries have confidence in them and that Iraq makes the decision to comply rather than to continue hiding its weapons of mass destruction — crucial, if we are to succeed in achieving a peaceful resolution of this issue.

I have heard loud and clear the concerns of many speakers that, on a decision so crucial, we should not rush into a war, that on a decision so crucial, any Iraqi violations must be discussed by the Security Council. Let me make totally clear that the United Kingdom Government would expect there to be a detailed Security Council discussion if either Mr. Blix or Mr. ElBaradei, whose professionalism and independence are not in question, reports that Iraq is not fully cooperating with the inspections process. We would want at that point to hear the views of all our Security Council colleagues.

I have heard in a number of interventions a concern that the non-permanent members of the Council have been kept in the dark. Some have even spoken of humiliation. I believe the facts have been misrepresented. None of the permanent members has been in a position so far to bring a draft resolution to each other here or to the Council as a whole. The permanent five have done no negotiating on a text in New York. Discussion in capitals has taken place on bilateral channels. Of course our Governments have been working to make a negotiation worthwhile; proper preparation is a responsible approach. We, the United Kingdom and the United States, have met with the non-permanent 10 twice as often since 12 September as we have with the other permanent members. Once there is a draft with a prospect of broad acceptance in the Council, no Council member will be excluded from discussion. Let us remain connected with reality in this respect.

I could not close these remarks without referring to the fact that Iraq is in breach of other Security Council obligations, including on the repatriation of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of all Kuwaiti property. These other violations may not threaten international peace and security in the same way as the issue of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, but they are perhaps more important issues in human and emotional terms, particularly for the families concerned. There can be no humane reason why Iraq has failed to comply for so long. We call on Iraq now to rectify that non-compliance, including by resuming its participation in the Tripartite Commission under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like at the outset to express our appreciation to South Africa for having requested, on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, that the Council hold this emergency open debate. I should like also to thank you, Mr. President, for having made prompt arrangements in this respect.

The absence for so long of a solution to the question of Iraq has not served peace and stability in the Gulf region or the authority and credibility of the Security Council, nor has it been conducive to improving the humanitarian situation in Iraq. An early and appropriate settlement of the Iraqi question is the important and urgent task facing the international community and the United Nations in particular.

To hold an open debate and earnestly heed the views of a large number of Member States under such circumstances will undoubtedly enable the Council better to handle the Iraqi question. The Chinese Government has consistently maintained that Iraq should unconditionally and strictly implement the relevant Security Council at an early date and fully cooperate with the United Nations on questions of weapons inspections and other questions.

We believe also that the international community should work tirelessly to seek a comprehensive settlement of the Iraqi question through political and diplomatic means on the basis of the relevant Council resolutions. Over the past few days, dozens of countries have participated in this open debate, which clearly attests to the importance that a large number of Member States attach to the question of Iraq, and to their concerns about the possible implications of this question for international relations.

The overwhelming majority of States have emphasized during the debate that the question of Iraq should be settled within the framework of the United Nations, that the Security Council should play a central role in the process and that the unity of the Security Council is of paramount importance.

A number of countries, especially the Arab States, have also expressed their strong for wish for

peace, not war. They have pointed out that war can only further exacerbate the already tense situation in the Middle East. The independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Kuwait and other countries of the region should be respected. These views and positions are very important, and we agree with them. We hope that the Security Council will give them serious consideration.

The question of disarmament is at the core of the Iraqi question. On the basis of resolution 687 (1991), Iraq must destroy all weapons of mass destruction in its possession and refrain from developing or using such weapons. But since the end of 1998, the United Nations disarmament process in Iraq has been suspended. Only when the United Nations weapons inspectors return to Iraq and conduct effective inspections can the truth ultimately emerge.

We are pleased to note that, thanks to the positive endeavours of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Secretary-General Moussa of the Arab League and other concerned parties, the Iraqi side announced last September that it would unconditionally accept the return of weapons inspectors. The United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) then engaged in a dialogue with the Iraqi side on practical arrangements for the inspection and achieved positive results. We hope that Iraq will honour its commitments and translate them into actual deeds.

We believe that the United Nations weapons inspectors should return to Iraq as soon as possible to conduct independent, fair and professional inspections and report truthfully and in a timely manner to the Council the results of such inspections, so that the Council can draw objective, fair and realistic conclusions on that basis.

Under such circumstances, it is not that we cannot consider the adoption by the Council of a new resolution on the question of the inspection. Such a draft resolution, however, should call for support for UNMOVIC and the IAEA. Its contents should be practical and feasible, in the interests of an appropriate settlement of the Iraqi question.

The Iraqi question involves many elements in addition to disarmament, including the humanitarian situation in Iraq and the missing Kuwaiti nationals and property. We call on all the parties concerned to continue to earnestly implement the oil-for-food programme and make further efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Iraq. We would also like to urge the Iraqi side to implement, as soon as possible, its obligations in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions and to take concrete steps for an early settlement of the question of the missing Kuwaitis and third country nationals.

The Iraqi question has reached a crucial juncture. The international community in general has high hopes of the Security Council. It hopes that the Council will be able to effectively undertake its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and take action to safeguard the purposes and principles of the Charter. The Chinese Government is ready to join other countries in promoting an appropriate settlement of the Iraqi question within the Security Council.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): On 12 September, President George Bush outlined to the General Assembly the history of Iraq's defiance of Security Council resolutions, listed the steps that Iraq must take if it wants peace and stated that the United States would work with the Security Council to hold Iraq to account.

President Bush's speech was a declaration of purpose, not a declaration of war. It put the United Nations in the spotlight and challenged the international community to restore the Security Council's relevance on this issue by confronting this threat to international peace and security and 11 years of failure by Iraq to accept the demands made of it after its invasion and destruction of Kuwait.

The threat today is serious and unique, and it arises directly from the Iraqi regime's own actions: its history of aggression and brutality, its defiance of the international community and its drive towards an arsenal of terror and destruction. This is a regime that has invaded two of its neighbours and tried to annihilate one of them; a regime that has used chemical weapons on its neighbours and its very own citizens; a regime that has lied about its development of weapons of mass destruction; a regime that signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and then proceeded to develop a major nuclear weapons programme.

Eleven years ago, as one of the conditions for ending the Persian Gulf war, the Security Council required the Iraqi regime to destroy its weapons of mass destruction and cease all development of such

weapons. As President Bush noted yesterday when signing the Congressional resolution on Iraq, at that time Iraq was given 15 days to fully disclose its weapons of mass destruction. The Baghdad regime has defied this obligation for 4,199 days.

The Security Council also demanded, 11 years ago, that Iraq return all prisoners from Kuwait and other lands and renounce all involvement with terrorism. Iraq agreed to these demands and more at the time, and these are commitments with which Iraq must comply. The Council has tried in every way to bring Iraq to peaceful fulfilment of the Gulf war ceasefire, yet the Iraqi regime has violated all of its obligations. As President Bush said earlier this month in Cincinnati, "the entire world has witnessed Iraq's 11-year history of defiance, deception and bad faith".

The Security Council is not the only international body that has focused on the behaviour of the Iraqi regime. Last year, a year when the United States was not a member, the Commission on Human Rights, based in Geneva, adopted resolution 2001/14, which strongly condemns the

> "systematic, widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Government of Iraq, resulting in an all-pervasive repression and oppression sustained by broad-based discrimination and widespread terror".

Today, exactly five weeks after the President spoke, we meet for the first time to publicly discuss the message that the Security Council will send to Iraq and to its leader, Saddam Hussein. Our view of that message has been clear from 12 September. There can be no more business as usual or toothless resolutions that Iraq will continue to ignore. Our intent is that the Council should meet the challenge and stand firm, resolute and united in adopting a draft resolution that holds Iraq to its commitments, lays out clearly what Iraq must do to comply and states that there will be consequences if Iraq refuses to do so.

We expect the Council to act, and when the Council adopts a draft resolution that sends a clear and united message to Iraq that it must fulfil its obligations, Iraq will have a choice. It will have to decide whether to take this last chance to comply. We hope that it will choose to comply. If it does not, we will seek compliance and disarmament by other means.

This is not an easy issue for any of us on the Council. The world's united response to aggression by Iraq in 1990 and 1991, expressed through a series of unique, ground-breaking Security Council resolutions, brought the world body closest to the visions of its founders. The Council's requirements were far reaching, commensurate with both the threat and the Council's determination that Iraq never again possess the means to threaten and even destroy its neighbours. In the ensuing decade, however, Iraq's failure to implement this body's peace terms became for the United Nations a question of enormous significance. The challenge now is whether the United Nations can perform the function its founders envisaged. We very much hope the answer will be, "Yes".

The five weeks since the President came to the United Nations to discuss the threat posed by Iraq have passed quickly. We have seen signs of emerging Council unity during intensive discussions here and in capitals, involving the highest levels of our respective Governments. We have also seen clear signs that Iraq is reverting to form. We have seen Iraq invite inspectors to return without conditions, and then immediately place conditions. We have seen requests for clarity from the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on practical arrangements met by Iraqi obfuscation and multiple answers, which in fact avoid answering at all.

Not surprisingly, in the first test of the so-called new Iraqi cooperation, Iraq has shown that it hopes to return to the word games, ephemeral commitments and misdirection of the past, while continuing to develop the world's deadliest weapons.

That is why a clear, firm message from the Council is so important. Miscalculation by Iraq will be dangerous. This body and, indeed, the entire membership of the United Nations do no favour to the people of Iraq, do no favour to those who seek a better future for Iraq, do no favour to the countries of the region and do no favour to the credibility of the United Nations if they create the impression that an outcome in which Iraq retains its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programmes is an acceptable or possible outcome.

Over the past five weeks, a consensus has been forming in the Council that the time for denial, deception and delay has come to an end and that Iraq

must be verifiably disarmed. There is growing agreement that there must be immediate, unconditional and unrestricted inspections of all Iraqi facilities that may have a role in the development of weapons of mass destruction.

The United States, together with the United Kingdom, has shared with the other members of the Council the elements of our vision of a resolution that will address Iraq's material breach of its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions, specify the types of access and authorities that UNMOVIC and IAEA must have to be able to effectively verify Iraqi disarmament, make clear Iraq's obligations and articulate to Iraq that there will be consequences to non-compliance.

The United States believes that the best way to ensure Iraqi compliance is through one resolution that is firm and unambiguous in its message.

We are considering the reactions we have received and will be placing before the Council, in the near future, a resolution with clear and immediate requirements — requirements that Iraq would voluntarily meet if it chooses to cooperate.

We have also shared these elements with the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. While they can and should speak for themselves, both Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have made it clear that they would welcome a new Security Council resolution that strengthens their hands and allows for more effective inspections.

While all this diplomatic activity has been taking place, in the United States we have been having our own great national debate. Last week, the House of Representatives and the Senate passed a joint resolution that expressed support for the administration's diplomatic efforts in the Security Council to ensure that "Iraq abandons its strategy of delay, evasion and non-compliance" and authorized the use of United States armed forces should diplomatic efforts fail. This resolution tells the world that the United States speaks with one determined voice. Yesterday, when President Bush signed this resolution, he said that he had not ordered the use of force. The United States hopes that the use of force will not become necessary. But the President also said that the choice for Iraq is straightforward: "Either the Iraqi regime will give up its weapons of mass destruction, or, for the sake of peace, the United States will lead a global coalition to disarm that regime."

Now, the spotlight is back on the Security Council. We hope and expect that the Council will act and play its proper role as a safeguard of our common security. If it fails to do so, then we and other States will be forced to act.

The approach of the United States and the United Kingdom aims at clarity — clarity with respect to what Iraq must now do to fulfil its 1991 obligations to restore peace and security in the region; clarity with respect to what inspectors must be allowed to do; and clarity with respect to our seriousness. Without such clarity, there is too high a danger that Iraq will miscalculate. And miscalculation by Iraq will lead to precisely the military action we all hope to avoid.

The Security Council faces a defining moment. The Council works best on Iraq when it works together. As we witnessed last spring with the successful passage of resolution 1409 (2002) and the establishment of the Goods Review List, when the Security Council is resolute and united, its actions produce results. We must stand together and show Iraq that its failure to comply will no longer be tolerated.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Since December 1998, United Nations disarmament inspectors have no longer been present in Iraq. For nearly four years now, the international community has not been able to verify whether Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction and whether it is pursuing programmes to that end.

By refusing to allow the return of United Nations inspectors, Iraq has defied the international community and the authority of the Security Council. Even though France does not possess irrefutable proof, there are several indications that Iraq has used this situation to pursue or resume its prohibited programmes, notably in the chemical and biological areas. The behaviour of the Baghdad authorities has given rise to strong suspicions in this regard.

This situation cannot be tolerated. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, in Iraq or elsewhere, constitutes a serious threat to international security. In the face of this challenge, it is the Security Council's duty to place firmness and lucidity in the service of a common objective. For France, that objective is the disarmament

of Iraq. This implies the return of the inspectors and the resumption of monitoring on the ground.

On 16 September, Iraq, under unanimous pressure from the international community and thanks to the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, agreed to the unconditional return of the inspectors. During discussions conducted in Vienna by the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Baghdad confirmed this decision. Practical arrangements were made for carrying out inspections. UNMOVIC and the IAEA must now return to Iraq as soon as possible. The United Nations must verify the sincerity of its commitments. In the light of past experience, the international community cannot be satisfied with words alone. Iraq must translate its promises into concrete, verifiable and lasting acts.

Here and there, doubts and reservations have been expressed about the inspectors' ability to fulfil their mission. France has the greatest confidence in the ability of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei to achieve the mandate entrusted to them by the Security Council with the utmost rigor and professionalism. In any case, there is no reason to question the effectiveness of their teams a priori, as the inspection regime established under resolution 1284 (1999) has not yet been tested on the ground.

Furthermore, the outcome of United Nations inspections has been very positive. It is a fact that United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) inspectors destroyed more weapons of mass destruction between 1991 and 1998 than did the military operations during the Gulf War. In 1998, the IAEA believed it had succeeded in dismantling the Iraqi nuclear programme.

It was not the inspections that failed, but the international community's ability to enforce its decisions in a sufficiently firm and united manner. France, however, is fully disposed to support measures strengthening the inspection regime, insofar as that proves necessary to facilitate the inspectors' work. The question of immediate access to the presidential sites, for example, must be examined by the Security Council.

On the other hand, we reject measures that would in fact multiply the risk of incidents without improving the effectiveness of the work carried out by UNMOVIC and the IAEA. We also set store by the multinational, independent nature of the inspectors; any measure countering this fundamental element would be tantamount to repeating past mistakes and would not have our support.

Finally, it is the opinion of Mr. Blix and Mr ElBaradei — that is, those who will have to lead the inspections on the ground — that should guide the Security Council in its choices. It is up to them to determine what would help them achieve their mission. Our duty is to assist them, not to complicate their task.

France attaches importance to the principle of collective security, which lies at the heart of the functioning of our Organization and the international order. The Iraqi question cannot be an exception. That is why we are proposing a two-stage approach. During the first stage, the Security Council should adopt a resolution clearly specifying the "rules of the game." It would define the inspection regime with a view to ensuring that the inspectors can accomplish their mission fully and without any hindrance. This resolution should also send a clear warning to Iraq that the Council will not tolerate new violations.

During the second stage, if UNMOVIC or the IAEA observe that Iraq is refusing to cooperate fully with inspectors, the Security Council would meet immediately to decide on the appropriate measures to take, without ruling out anything a priori.

France believes that this approach, which is also the one proposed by the Secretary-General in his message to the Council, is the only one that can offer us the unity, cohesion, fairness and legitimacy so crucial to the effectiveness of our action.

The unity of the Security Council is absolutely vital. In the past, Iraq has taken advantage of divisions within the international community to renege on its obligations and defy the Council's authority. Only a united front will convince it not to repeat this error. Only a two-stage approach will allow us to preserve our Council's unity; any kind of "automaticity" in the use of force will profoundly divide us.

The two-stage approach is, rather, the choice of cohesion. United in sending Iraq a message of firmness in an initial resolution, the Security Council will, we have no doubt, remain united to assume all of its

responsibilities during the second stage, should Iraq violate its commitments.

The Security Council must also demonstrate fairness by showing Iraq that war is not inevitable if it fully and scrupulously fulfils its obligations. This new behaviour would open the way to the suspension and then the lifting of sanctions, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

Finally, given the gravity of the situation, in which nothing less than peace or war is at stake, it is essential for the Security Council to remain in charge of the process every step of the way. This is fundamental for the legitimacy of our action and essential for maintaining unanimous support for our common objectives.

This debate constitutes an important, perhaps even cardinal, moment for our Council and, beyond that, for our Organization. What is at stake in the ongoing negotiations is fundamental: even beyond Iraq, we are talking about the future of the international order, relations between North and South, and notably, our relationship with the Arab world. An action of uncertain legitimacy, one that does not enjoy the support of the international community, would not be understood and could gravely affect these relations.

By placing this action within the framework of collective security, the French approach aims to ensure its legitimacy and effectiveness, while respecting the principles defined by the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Traore (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Sir, for organizing this public meeting on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. My thanks also go to the Ambassador of South Africa, who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), made this request.

The holding of this debate is most timely. The subject we are discussing is at the heart of current international events and at the centre of the Council's concerns. This is an important occasion for United Nations Member States to engage in a broad exchange of views on what should be done to resolve the thorny Iraqi question.

Since the resumption of discussions some months ago with the Iraqi Government on the modalities for the return of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), how many comments have been made, and how many questions have arisen regarding this crisis? Even if the latest meeting in Vienna on practical arrangements did not meet all expectations, it did allow for a significant advance in the resolution of the necessary preconditions for resuming inspections in Iraq.

In that regard, we should mention in particular the acceptance by the Iraqi authorities of all the rights of inspection, in conformity with the provisions contained in the relevant Security Council resolutions. That means that the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will have immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites, mobile or fixed, that they deem appropriate to inspect. While taking note of that commitment, my delegation is of the view that the Security Council should ensure that it is carried out fully and completely in order to avoid a repetition of the bad precedent of 1998, which many delegations still bear in mind. That means that a precise, updated mandate should be given to inspectors, whose activities should not meet with any hindrance.

My delegation is prepared to make its contribution to any approach in line with that rationale. We note that the objective is the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, we believe that all other related and pending questions should be resolved as swiftly as possible in order to enable the inspectors to get back to work. From that perspective, the talks entered into must be pursued and brought to fruition in a spirit of good cooperation and objectivity. In that regard, my delegation wishes to express its thanks to Mr. Blix and to Mr. ElBaradei for their efforts and determination to carry out their mandate effectively. Moreover, we take this opportunity to urge the Iraqi authorities to make every effort to achieve a definitive settlement of the issue of missing persons and that of confiscated Kuwaiti property, in conformity with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My country, Guinea, is devoted to the scrupulous respect for Council resolutions and to the maintenance of international peace and security. We hope that we shall continue to give pride of place to negotiation, with a view to peacefully resolving this crisis and to keeping the international community safe from a conflagration that would have grave consequences. My delegation is convinced that, if the measures that we

have described are effectively carried out in a spirit of good will and frank cooperation, supported by flexibility and impartiality, we shall together be able to overcome the obstacles and to achieve the comprehensive implementation of all the relevant Council resolutions. Thus, we shall have done good work by having contributed to preserving the unity and the credibility of the Council as well as peace and security in the sensitive region of the Middle East.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Our point of departure must be full Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions. That must be the clear message that emerges from this open meeting.

The international community is faced with a grave threat from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are uncertain and insecure because we do not know the extent of that threat, apart from its potentially devastating effects. Iraq is an important reason for this insecurity.

There is, however, no uncertainty whatsoever with respect to the obligations of Iraq. Since the end of the Gulf war, the world community has demanded, through the Security Council, that Iraq destroy, remove or render harmless all its weapons of mass destruction. A system of monitoring and verification — the United Nations weapons inspectors — was set up to ensure Iraqi compliance. The inspections are not an end in themselves, but a means for the international community to satisfy itself that Iraq no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction.

For almost 12 years, Iraq has ignored the demands of the Security Council. Under strong pressure, the Government of Iraq has now agreed to receive inspectors without conditions. Norway hopes that that represents an Iraqi change of attitude and a willingness to comply with its obligation to cooperate fully with the United Nations. There are still, however, practical and unresolved questions to be tackled before inspectors can start fulfilling their mandate.

As members of the Security Council, we are faced with the challenge of determining how we can ensure credible inspections that remove the insecurity with which we are faced today. In the immediate future, we should have a clear and unambiguous Security Council resolution, with a clear and unambiguous timetable, as a basis for the new inspections. Another important element must be the free and unconditional access of the inspectors to the whole of Iraq. That means the Security Council will have to repeal the agreement concluded between Iraq and the United Nations in 1998 on special procedures for inspecting the so-called presidential sites — which include several hundred buildings — unless Iraq itself declares that it will disregard the agreement. No buildings or sites can be given immunity from inspections if we are to get definite answers to the questions linked to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. We cannot have an inspections regime with loopholes. In our view, the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and of the International Atomic Energy Agency must be fully clarified before the inspectors return.

To summarize, two main concerns must be dealt with. First, it is essential to work towards the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and of their delivery systems without using military force. But if Iraq should yet again fail to comply, there must, in our view, be absolutely no doubt that that will have extremely serious consequences for the country. Secondly, any reaction towards Iraq must be anchored in international law. The Security Council's demands on Iraq are clear and precise. We feel strongly that this matter is the province of the Security Council. In that regard, it is vital that the Security Council stand united.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): The topic we are discussing is a very serious one, but I hope that I may begin with a slightly mischievous remark. One of the most common themes that we have heard in the discussion so far is that this whole process has seen the marginalization of the elected members of the Council. Yet this afternoon, when all of the permanent members except one had spoken and an elected member began to speak, the Chamber emptied. I think the actions in this Chamber indicate the realities that we must deal with.

I turn now to my text. This meeting is timely. The whole world is focused on the issue of Iraq. As more than 15 months have passed since the Security Council last met formally to consider the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, it is time for the Council to revisit the key issues. As we conduct our debate in this Chamber, we cannot ignore a wider global debate that is taking place on the same subject. There is a clear international consensus that Iraq must comply with the Council's resolutions that it has hitherto defied. But a simultaneous discussion is taking place about the possibility of war in Iraq, a war that would have potentially far-reaching consequences. That is why the

Council needs to confront this issue squarely. Only the Council can deliver a credible alternative path towards peace.

The good news is that United Nations weapons inspectors are poised to return to Iraq, after a hiatus of nearly four years. To ensure that they return to Iraq with a strong hand, intensive consultations are underway on a new resolution. Most Member States have learned through the media about the concepts contained in the various draft texts. Intensive discussions in the corridors have, in turn, led to today's discussions in the Chamber. We are pleased that the wider membership has decided to participate in this debate and to provide their views on how the Council should proceed.

As we conduct our meeting today it is vital to remind ourselves that the Security Council, pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter, has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In his address to the General Assembly on 12 September, United States President George Bush urged that the terms of the Council's previous resolutions against Iraq be enforced. Secretary-General Kofi Annan also declared to the General Assembly on 12 September that "If Iraq's defiance continues, the Security Council must face its responsibilities."

Virtually all of us, including Singapore, have consistently taken the position that Iraq must comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 687 (1991), and 1284 (1999). Those two key resolutions provide the governing standards for Iraqi compliance. Article 25 of the Charter clearly states that the decisions of the Security Council are legally binding on all States. All Security Council resolutions, irrespective of whether they are adopted under Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the Charter, must be complied with. No Council resolution on any issue can be cast aside without consequence. Hence, to maintain its credibility and authority, the Council must vigorously pursue the implementation of all its resolutions, whether they are on Iraq, the Middle East, the Balkans or Africa. Selective implementation will undermine the Council's moral authority.

In the case of Iraq, some important questions have remained outstanding since the end of the Gulf War, in 1991. One of the most critical of those questions is the disarmament of all Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. That obligation was the keystone of the post-Gulf War ceasefire settlement reached between the coalition forces and Iraq. The ceasefire terms adopted by the Council in resolution 687 (1991) required Iraq to end its weapons of mass destruction programmes, recognize Kuwait, account for missing Kuwaitis and third-party nationals, return Kuwaiti property and end its support for international terrorism. Resolution 687 (1991) was designed as a comprehensive framework to restore peace and maintain the security of the region. Regrettably, Iraq has not complied with many of the terms of that resolution, even though 11 and-a-half years have passed.

The United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was also formed under resolution 687 (1991) to oversee Iraq's compliance with its disarmament obligations. Unfortunately, problems over access to suspected weapons of mass destruction sites began almost as soon as UNSCOM commenced operations, in April 1991. Instead of declarations and verifications, inspections soon turned into a persistent pattern of hide-and-seek. The inspections crises became especially acute after 1997 and 1998. The tense stand-offs and expulsions of inspectors were followed by temporary compromises that allowed UNSCOM to resume inspections.

In February 1998, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Iraq and the Secretary-General. It provided for access to eight presidential sites by inspectors and diplomatic observers. Resolution 1154 (1998), which was adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, stressed that compliance by Iraq with its obligations to accord immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access in conformity with the relevant resolutions was necessary for the implementation of resolution 687 (1991). It also warned that "any violation would have severest consequences for Iraq".

Despite that, the situation deteriorated. Iraq barred UNSCOM from inspecting new facilities. In November 1998, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1205 (1998). Iraq's refusal to cooperate with UNSCOM was deemed a flagrant violation of the ceasefire agreement. Further efforts to obtain Iraqi cooperation were not successful. The inspectors were withdrawn. That was followed by a bombing campaign in December 1998 by the United States and the United Kingdom. Known as Operation Desert Fox, that campaign was directed against Iraqi

weapons of mass destruction facilities and other military targets. We should bear in mind this unfortunate turn of events in 1998 as we attempt once more to achieve the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on Iraq.

After December 1998, it took the Council almost a year to reach agreement on a new resolution. Resolution 1284 (1999) was adopted by a vote of 11 in favour and 4 abstentions. It provided for the suspension of most sanctions if Iraq cooperated fully with UNSCOM's successor, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Almost three years have passed since that resolution was adopted, but UNMOVIC has been unable to resume its inspections. Today, even though UNMOVIC can return to Iraq without the legal necessity of a new resolution, a consensus is developing that there may be wisdom in obtaining agreement on a new resolution before the return of inspectors.

First, resolution 1284 (1999) was not adopted unanimously. Three permanent members and one non-permanent member abstained because of ambiguities in that resolution. This also underscores the need to secure Council unity and the will to enforce the decisions of the Council, which is ultimately more important than passing new resolutions. Indeed, in a statement delivered on his behalf yesterday by Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette, the Secretary-General also emphasized the importance of Security Council unity.

Secondly, we must recognize that the geopolitics of this issue have shifted since December 1999. A Security Council that does not recognize new geopolitical realities will inevitably become a Council that is unable to carry out its work effectively. We note that in the statement delivered on his behalf by the Deputy Secretary-General the Secretary-General also said that the Council may "choose to pass a new resolution strengthening the inspectors' hands so that there are no weaknesses or ambiguities". Indeed, the Secretary-General considered that such a step would be appropriate.

The events of 11 September have also brought new focus to the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Singapore attaches great importance to this question. In our view, the emphasis of any new resolution should be on disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, in compliance with the decisions of the Security Council. The return of United Nations inspectors is the first step towards Iraq's compliance with all Council resolutions. But inspections per se are not the goal. The final goal is to ensure that Iraq does not retain any weapons of mass destruction and that it does not revive any such weapons programmes in that regard.

We believe that United Nations weapons inspectors must have all the rights of inspection that would enable them to achieve these goals. We urge Iraq to cooperate fully with UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to enable their inspectors to perform effective inspections and monitoring. This means giving immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites, including presidential sites, without exception. Unfettered access and the provision of solid evidence matching Iraq's declarations will provide a high level of confidence that Iraq is complying with its obligations to eradicate all weapons of mass destruction.

We note that the Government of Iraq has yet to provide its confirmation of the points of understanding reached in the Vienna talks on the practical arrangements for inspections, as outlined in the joint letter of 8 October from Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. We urge the Government of Iraq to do so unequivocally and without delay. As Mr. Blix told the Security Council at its informal consultations on 15 October, the simplest way to clear up remaining points would be to affirm the contents of the joint letter.

At the same time, UNMOVIC and IAEA must ensure that all inspections are carried out, as Mr. Blix has repeatedly put it, in an effective but correct manner. Today, the stakes are very high. The difference between successful and unsuccessful inspections may be the difference between war and peace. Mr. Blix therefore bears a heavy burden. However, we have full confidence in him and his team, and his long experience, professionalism, judgement, impartiality and temperament are eminently suited to the task ahead. It is therefore essential that the Security Council not attempt to micromanage him as he carries out his tasks. As one of our colleagues said in the Council's informal consultations, we should strengthen his hand and not tie his feet.

Even as we focus on the important question of disarming Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, we must not lose sight of the human dimension of the Iraq issue. Singapore attaches great importance to improving the humanitarian situation of the people of Iraq, who have suffered greatly over the past decade. Security Council resolution 661 (1990) was adopted 12 years ago. Although the sanctions were aimed at the Government of Iraq, the innocent people of Iraq have borne the heaviest burden of sanctions, due largely to the Government's continued non-compliance with Council resolutions. Furthermore, after more than a decade, Kuwaiti and other families continue to be deprived of a sense of closure on the issue of missing Kuwaitis and third country nationals.

In an effort to address the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, the oil-for-food programme was established under resolution 986 (1995) of April 1995. It has been in effect since December 1996 and has made a considerable difference in the lives of the Iraqi people. But it is not a perfect system. It has had to be modified over the years to meet the humanitarian needs of the people. The revised procedures for the Goods Review List adopted in resolution 1409 (2002) of May 2002 were another step forward in the efforts to further improve that system. But the current shortfall in funding for humanitarian contracts due to the fall in oil exports is of great concern. We will work with our colleagues in the Council to urgently address the factors contributing to the drop in exports. This is an urgent issue.

According to the latest figures of the oil-for-food programme, Iraq would need to export about $7 billion worth of oil during the current phase which ends on 25 November, to meet its humanitarian programme budget of $5 billion. Since the current phase began on 30 May 2002, only $3.3 billion worth of oil has been shipped. In other words, exports would have to be doubled in half the time to meet the programme's target.

The oil-for-food programme was conceived as a temporary measure to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. It is not a substitute for normal economic activity in Iraq. It will end as soon as the Government of Iraq has fully complied with relevant resolutions. Therefore, Iraq's full compliance with relevant Council resolutions provides the path for sanctions relief.

We urge Iraq to cooperate fully with UNMOVIC in identifying and accounting for all of its weapons of mass destruction programmes. Under paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991), the embargo on Iraqi exports will have no further force or effect once the Council agrees that Iraq has complied with all the requirements relating to its weapons of mass destruction disarmament obligations. It is also important to recall that resolution 687 (1991) notes in paragraph 14 that these actions to be taken by Iraq "represent steps towards the goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction".

We stand at a crossroads on this issue. Only one path will bring us towards peace. If Iraq refuses to meet its disarmament obligations, it will most certainly take itself down the other path. This is an outcome that all of us would like to avoid. The final choice therefore lies with the Government of Iraq. The people of Iraq have suffered for far too long. We urge this Government to make the right decision at this critical moment.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I would like to thank the group of the Non-Aligned Movement for taking the initiative in seeking this debate. It is most important that all Members of the United Nations have the opportunity to state their views in the Security Council on this critical issue.

Ireland fully associates itself with the statement made earlier in the debate by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland is a strong advocate of the system of collective international security enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Under that system, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the issue before us, as on every issue, Ireland considers that it becomes all of us, whether serving on the Council or not, to respect in every way the integrity of the Council in the exercise of its duty. The primary responsibility to make decisions in accordance with the Charter regarding the maintenance of international peace and security belongs to the Council, and it must rest there. Likewise, the Council has the right and the responsibility under the Charter to make the necessary judgement if and when its decisions are not respected or implemented in full. It is for the Council to decide on the appropriate response.

To be a member of the Security Council is to be especially aware — as all of us surely are aware — of how Governments and people around the world look to the Council for a clear lead on grave and sensitive matters of which it is seized. It is also to be aware that many Governments and people around the world — people living their day-to-day lives, not just political elites — very often define their positions and set their moral and political compass by the judgements and decisions of the Council. This is something that is new in international affairs. And it is a trust we must in every respect be worthy of.

The Charter provides that all United Nations Member States, without exception, agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. It is a matter of grave concern when any Member State ignores the will of the international community and continues over many years to disregard the resolutions of the Council. It undermines respect for international law. It weakens the international system that we depend on for our individual and collective security.

This system was put in place to protect us all. We are all made less secure when any Member State, on any issue, flouts its rules. The Council has a clear duty to address such situations and to ensure compliance, in accordance with the Charter.

In the case of Iraq, Ireland has long been concerned that legally binding obligations imposed under Security Council resolutions remain unimplemented. The effects of Iraq's failure to respect the Council's resolutions have weighed heavily on the people of Iraq. Having endured a cruel decade of war, they have had to endure a decade of comprehensive economic sanctions on their country. The blame for this suffering rests primarily with the Government of Iraq. If it had implemented all its obligations, if it had cooperated fully and immediately with arms inspectors, the sanctions would have been removed long ago. It chose not to do so and it is the people of Iraq who have suffered from this choice, made by those who govern them.

The situation has also borne heavily on Iraq's neighbours, and particularly on Kuwait. As long as the Council's resolutions remain unimplemented, the security of the region cannot be assured. The failure to return or to account for all Kuwaiti and third country nationals and to return all Kuwaiti property defies the authority of the Security Council and calls into question the sincerity of the commitments that Iraq entered into at the Arab League Summit in Baghdad.

Ireland welcomed the fact that President Bush came to the United Nations and laid before us the concerns of his country regarding the threat posed by Iraq's failure to comply with its obligations under Security Council resolutions. It is right that the Security Council give these concerns the most careful consideration.

Iraq's failure to comply with its obligations has long presented a challenge to the United Nations and the Security Council. Ireland strongly commends the Secretary-General for his efforts to secure Iraq's agreement to accept weapons inspections, which, as he himself told us in the General Assembly, is the indispensable first step towards assuring the world that all Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have been eliminated.

We welcomed Iraq's agreement on 16 September to accept the return of weapons inspectors unconditionally. We strongly urge the Iraqi authorities to back words with action. They must cooperate fully with the inspectors, hold nothing back, and allow full, free and unfettered access to all places in the country, to all relevant documentation and to all relevant personnel.

We also urge Iraq to make it clear that the inspectors will be allowed immediate and complete access to all parts of the country, including presidential sites. Such access is necessary if the inspections are to have the necessary credibility within the international community. Iraq should, without further delay, confirm that it accepts and will facilitate all the practical arrangements required for the conduct of inspections.

Ireland has the strongest conviction that the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency, under the leadership of, respectively, Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, will carry out the inspections for which this Council has provided with the required rigour and professionalism. We are entirely confident that they will be guided solely by their mandate and that their judgements will be objective and impartial. Ireland believes that the inspectors should enter Iraq as soon as possible and begin the process of disarmament, in accordance with resolution 1284 (1999) and any new provisions which might be put in place by the Council. We also believe

that if Iraq, despite its recent commitment, again fails to cooperate with inspectors, the Council must, as the Secretary-General said, face its responsibilities.

As a member of the Security Council, Ireland is deeply conscious of the overwhelming wish of the international community that the solution to this issue be found through peaceful means and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We will weigh very carefully the views expressed by the membership in this debate.

We believe that this common goal can be achieved and that it is well within the ability of the Security Council to devise a resolution which will create the necessary conditions to do so. In Article 24 of the Charter, the Members of the United Nations agreed that, in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council acts on their behalf. The Security Council is therefore entitled to expect the full support of the international community, but it must also ensure that it retains that support. The full authority of the Security Council is greatly enhanced when its actions correspond to the wishes of the broader United Nations membership and are seen to enjoy their support.

In particular, in a matter of such moment as this, the Security Council should make every effort to command the widest possible consensus among its own members. There could be no better demonstration of the strength of the Council's resolve. The resolution should insist on unfettered access for the arms inspectors. It should clarify the modalities, remove ambiguities and facilitate their work so as to ensure effective inspection of all sites. The resolution should leave no doubt that Iraq must come into compliance and do so without delay or further attempts to evade the obligations imposed on it by the Security Council. The resolution should make it clear that the Council will take any necessary decision to enforce compliance if Iraq does not cooperate as required. Any such decision must be taken by the Security Council in full accordance with the Charter.

From our discussions with other Council members, it is clear to us that the vast majority, perhaps all, believe that such an approach would be most likely to lead to the peaceful solution desired by the international community and that they would be willing to support such a resolution.

I have already referred to the suffering of the people of Iraq, which is primarily due to the disastrous choices made by their Government. This is why Ireland actively supported the negotiation and adoption earlier this year of resolution 1409 (2002), which established the Goods Review List, setting the humanitarian programme on a new footing.

That programme, however, depends on a flow of oil sufficient to provide it with the necessary funding. It is most regrettable that, for various reasons — chief among them Iraq's interruptions of its oil exports, Iraq's imposition of illegal surcharges and Iraq's sales of oil outside the escrow account — funding for the humanitarian programme remains inadequate. It is most important that this issue be addressed by the Council in the period ahead.

Finally, Ireland hopes that an effective and thorough inspection process, with the full cooperation of the Iraqi authorities, will lead on to an early suspension of sanctions, in full accordance with the provisions of resolution 1284 (1999).

The Government of Iraq has it in its power to remove the present tensions and to end the suffering of its people. All it has to do is to meet in full and without delay its obligations under Security Council resolutions. It should do so without any further prevarication.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation actively supported the request of the Non-Aligned Movement to convene this open debate on Iraq. It gives the Security Council an opportunity to hear and consider the opinions of all States Members of the United Nations before determining how to proceed on the question of Iraq. This approach is in full consonance with the United Nations Charter.

For almost 12 years now, the international community has sought a way to settle the Iraqi situation. Throughout that time, the Security Council has adopted more than 50 resolutions and endured several severe crises. The current ongoing impasse is rooted not only in the position of the Iraqi side, although we are far from condoning Baghdad's behaviour, while the need for Iraq to meet all its obligations under Security Council resolutions has been frequently alluded to yesterday and today. We fully support such assessments. At the same time, in a number of instances the Security Council has been

unable to hold up its own end with respect to an objective assessment of the situation and to meeting its own obligations to work for a comprehensive settlement in the Persian Gulf.

Throughout their many years of work in Iraq, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conducted some 7,000 inspections. As a result, they achieved significant progress in shutting down Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes. The inspections allowed us to destroy more components of weapons of mass destruction than were destroyed by the military strikes against Iraq during the Gulf War.

We have managed to structure a material balance in the nuclear sphere which, in 1998, in the opinion of IAEA, allowed us to convert this file into a long-term monitoring regime.

Unfortunately, the Security Council was not able to recognize this fact four years ago. It is an important thing that this conclusion was supported by the Director General of IAEA, Mr. ElBaradei, in his letter to the President of the Security Council of 14 October, in which he clearly indicated that there are no outstanding unresolved nuclear disarmament issues. This has been circulated to Security Council Members and everyone can become acquainted with it.

There is a virtually complete picture of the missile situation as well. A significant portion of the stocks of chemical weapons have been destroyed, although there were some outstanding issues requiring further clarification. The largest problems persisted in the biological sphere. But on these issues and all the outstanding issues, solutions were possible. At any rate, documents of the former UNSCOM testify that such was the case.

However, this did not in fact happen. In December 1998 the head of the former UNSCOM provoked a crisis, arbitrarily withdrawing inspectors from Iraq without the approval of the Security Council. His report came to the Council only after United States and United Kingdom aviation had launched military strikes against Iraq. In fact, the United States Government, after these strikes, stated that the strikes had dealt with the issue of eliminating the vestiges of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programmes, although the relevant information was not given to the Security Council.

The former UNSCOM, in this way, through its acts of provocation, fully discredited itself and simultaneously undermined the pre-December 1998 prospects for reaching a comprehensive settlement.

The Security Council then found itself in a profound crisis not of its own making on the question of Iraq and for a long time was unable to get out of this impasse. And then, a year later, we drafted Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), which allowed us to renew the inspections on a new genuinely international basis. However, this resolution contained extremely ambiguous criteria for suspension of the sanctions, which gave an opportunity to individual Security Council members at their discretion to maintain the embargo indefinitely.

For this reason Russia, together with France, China and Malaysia, abstained in the vote on resolution 1284 (1999). We made proposals to give concrete substance to the criteria of sanctions suspension in the context of a comprehensive settlement. These proposals are well known and they remain in force.

We will not forget the fact that in resolution 1382 (2001), the members unanimously stated their commitment to a comprehensive settlement on the basis of existing Council decisions, including a fine-tuned Security Council resolution 1284 (1999). The Security Council must carry out these commitments, as the other part of Council resolution 1382 (2001) was carried out, and create a goods review list. So there were two parts to the resolution. One part of it has been complied with, the other has not.

Russia, being a responsible member of the international community, has done and will do its utmost to prevent a renewal of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programmes. We are prepared to cooperate on this matter with all States. Up to now, we, like all unbiased observers, have not seen any kind of persuasive evidence that there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq or programmes to develop them. Nor have we seen any other facts that would situate Iraq in the context of combating terrorism. The only way to remove any doubts is the immediate redeployment of the international inspectors to Iraq. And today, there are no legal or technical impediments to doing this. Moreover, as a result of the intensive efforts of a whole host of countries, including Russia, as well as the United Nations Secretary-General, the leadership of UNMOVIC and IAEA, Baghdad has

consented, not only to an unconditional return of the United Nations inspectors, but also to UNMOVIC's and IAEA's new, enhanced and very effective parameters for conducting the inspections.

In this way we have everything we need to ensure that there is no renewal of the proscribed military programmes in Iraq and that there is a political and diplomatic settlement of the crisis. We see no reason to delay deployment of the UNMOVIC and IAEA structures in Iraq. Neither formally nor legally, in order to begin the inspections, do we need any new decisions to be taken by the Security Council. This has been confirmed by Messrs. Blix and ElBaradei. They do not need new decisions. They need clarity.

Do all Security Council members support the swift redeployment of the inspectors in Iraq? If the Council has a prevailing desire to give further support to UNMOVIC and the IAEA in the interest of an effective implementation of existing resolutions, then we will be prepared to look at the relevant proposals, including and based on the great importance of maintaining Council unity.

We are calling for collective steps by the international community. Unilateral actions do not facilitate the efforts for a settlement, as we see over and over again, according to the example of the unilaterally announced so-called no-fly zones. At the same time, with the efforts of non-renewal of Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes in Iraq, we must continue to press for Iraq's compliance with all other Security Council requirements, particularly the need to shed light on the fate of the missing detainees, a swift conclusion of the process underway to return the Kuwaiti archives and a return of Kuwaiti property.

When we listen to the media, we might get the impression that the most important thing is to reach an agreement on whether or nor we are adopting one resolution or two. In fact, the issue is not how many resolutions, or do we need any resolutions. That diverts attention from the crux of the matter. But in fact we believe that the crux of the matter is the following.

If we are all sincerely interested in the non-renewal of weapons of mass destruction programmes in Iraq, then what is the remaining issue? What are we waiting for? The inspectors can travel as early as tomorrow and Iraq knows that it must fully and scrupulously cooperate with the inspectors. If we are talking not about the deployment of the inspections but about an attempt to use the Security Council to create a legal basis for the use of force, or even for a regime change of a United Nations Member State — and this goal has been constantly and publicly alluded to by several officials — then we see no way how the Security Council could give its consent to that. I reiterate that the crux of the matter is not in the number of resolutions.

The Charter powers of the Security Council allow it at any time to make decisions about any measures which could be required to eliminate real threats. The important thing now is to achieve a comprehensive settlement, based on political and diplomatic methods, with the central role of the Security Council and in strict compliance with Council resolutions on the norms of international law.

In this we see the common platform for the United Nations work on Iraq and we are prepared to interact on this platform with other members of the Security Council. This is what we have been called to by the vast majority of the international community during the discussions yesterday and today. That is the opinion of the world community. And that is geo-political reality as well. We are convinced that Security Council members will not be able to ignore this call.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I would like to reassure the representative of the Russian Federation that, according to the details provided by the Secretariat, all of the letters received from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have now been circulated to all members of the Council. The latest document received is that sent by the representative of the Director General of the IAEA, at the United Nations. It was sent to all Member States Wednesday night 16 October 2002.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) *(spoke in Spanish)*: My delegation endorses the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Rio Group. We are also grateful also for the statements that have been made here by so many delegations during the past two days where we find a variety of perspectives on this issue that will serve as a frame of reference for further discussions within the Security Council.

In recognizing the importance of this general debate on Iraq, we wish to stress the centrality of this multilateral forum in discussing this situation that has attracted enormous attention on the part of the Security Council over the past twelve years. We also stress the

special importance of using multilateral means to respond adequately and legitimately to issues of global concern. We trust that, at the end of our exchange, the actions adopted will confirm the Security Council as the central and indispensable actor in any international decision regarding Iraq.

Colombia is participating in the consideration of this issue, motivated essentially by the need to preserve the role and effectiveness of the United Nations and the multilateral system; by the need to stress the role of the Security Council as the principal guarantor of international peace and security; by the need to have all Member States comply unconditionally with its resolutions, and by the need to reaffirm international law and the general principles that make possible our peaceful coexistence.

We are aware of the general dissatisfaction in the international community regarding the response the Iraqi Government has given in the past to the demands set by the Security Council following the events of 2 August 1990. Up until just a few weeks ago, the attitude of Iraq towards the Secretary-General was intransigent. Its communications with regard to the Council were defiant and its views on the resolutions adopted were a source of considerable surprise. Iraq sowed doubt and mistrust in the international community and thus, in turn, well-founded suspicions were created with regard to the possibility that Iraq was continuing its programmes for the development of weapons of mass destruction.

We value the intention of Iraq to cooperate unconditionally with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) for the return of weapons inspectors. We recognize the progress made and the practical results achieved in negotiations between the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC and the Baghdad Government. But we note, at the same time, that the work of the Security Council and each of its members would have been considerably easier if, from the outset, the Baghdad authorities had cooperated unconditionally in applying the Security Council resolutions in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter.

It was clear to the international community that its unequivocal signals that measures would be taken in the case of Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions led to a change of attitude on the part of the Iraqi authorities.

We firmly support the work of Dr. Hans Blix and his UNMOVIC team, as well as that of Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei of the IAEA. Their professionalism and great diplomatic skill have been evident in recent weeks. We are certain the Security Council will continue to support their leadership so that they can achieve the objective of disarmament, which has not been possible for more than a decade.

We consider it indispensable that the weapons inspectors should be able, as soon as possible, to finish the work that the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was unable to complete. It is urgent that they examine and verify the information the Iraqi Government is obligated to provide its compliance with Security Council resolutions. We are sure there will be credible, serious, respectful, professional and firm inspections, for which purpose we need genuine cooperation on the part of the Iraqi authorities.

UNMOVIC, however, must arrive on site with a renewed mandate from the Security Council that validates its determinations and adapts them to the new realities. For Colombia, there are political and legal reasons that make it necessary to define with precision, firmness and clarity the parameters for the inspections. This would be consistent with the statements of Dr. Blix to the effect that it is advisable to begin activities on the ground after the Council has reached a decision.

Our greatest challenge is striking a balance between, on one hand, the willingness of the Baghdad Government to fulfil its obligations, and, on the other, the steadfastness and determination that the international community must maintain to prevent a repetition of the challenge faced by the Council during the last four years.

Given present circumstances, this is a unique opportunity and, in any event, the only opportunity for a nation that must overcome isolation and rejoin the community of nations on equal footing. Therefore, the greatest challenge for Iraq is to demonstrate to the world that it does not constitute a threat to anyone.

Iraq not only has problems relating to its potential capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction. There is a disturbing humanitarian situation concerning the Iraqi population, for which the Iraqi Government is directly responsible. The oil-for-food programme established by the Council to respond effectively to that situation has shown favourable results, despite difficulties in its implementation.

There are also other pending issues which must be resolved satisfactorily. We refer to the return of Kuwaiti property by Iraq, especially the national archives, on which a commitment was recently reached. Additionally, there is the matter of prisoners-of-war and missing persons who are nationals of Kuwait and other States. The discussion on the return of weapons inspectors should not distract us from those obligations of the Baghdad Government.

Twelve years ago, when Iraq launched its terrible invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Colombia was, at that time also, a non-permanent member of this Council. On that occasion, Iraq disregarded the decisions of the Council and other means had to be resorted to, which, unfortunately, did not achieve their goal. This time we have great confidence in the statesmanship of the actors involved and their ability to ensure that we will not become involved in a political and military cycle similar to that of 1990.

We, the Council members, must make a fundamental contribution, which would begin with a supreme effort to narrow differences and decide, in a cohesive, even unanimous, manner, what course to follow to resolve this critical conflict.

Let me conclude with two thoughts. First, we should separate the subject of this general debate from the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian issue. The political motivations that underlie our positions on the two situations are substantially different.

Secondly, developments in this situation and in other situations on the Council's agenda should not distract us from the fight against international terrorism, which is the biggest challenge facing today's world. Terrorism does not rest, and it has continued to show its almost unlimited capacity for causing destruction and death. We must continue facing it with renewed determination.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to South Africa and to the Non-Aligned Movement for having taken the initiative to hold this very timely open debate on the situation in Iraq.

My delegation listened with interest to the statements made by preceding speakers and shares the general concern at the mounting tension created by the problem of disarming Iraq.

As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria supports the statement made yesterday by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union.

As the Secretary-General recalled in the statement he made at the outset of the debate — a statement that my country endorses — it is now more than ever necessary to maintain the credibility of the United Nations. For Bulgaria, maintaining the central role of the Security Council in resolving the Iraqi problem is of crucial importance. My country is convinced that the United Nations and the Security Council are in a position to resolve the crisis through diplomatic means in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law.

President Bush's speech before the General Assembly on 12 September 2002, as well as his subsequent public statements and those of other American leaders, attest to the fact that the United States has made the fundamental choice to use the mechanism of the Security Council, which cannot be circumvented, to resolve the problem of disarming Iraq. Bulgaria, which attaches great importance to the principle of multilateralism as a regulating principle for international relations, is encouraged by this choice on the part of the United States.

My country is convinced that the range of diplomatic means for a peaceful solution of the crisis has not yet been exhausted.

The Bulgarian delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his constructive role in the dialogue with Iraq. His political experience, wisdom, humanity and moral prestige are valuable assets for the United Nations and the Security Council at this crucial moment in the history of our Organization, at a time when its credibility is being sorely tested.

Bulgaria is grateful to the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), Mr. Hans Blix, for having made his skills and professionalism available to the Council. His independent judgement is not to be doubted. Bulgaria reiterates its full confidence in him and wishes to assure him, as well as Mr. ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), of its full support.

The time has come objectively to assess the often turbulent relations that have existed between Iraq and

the Security Council since 1991. It must be acknowledged that, had Iraq abided by resolution 687 (1991) in 1991, the sanctions would have been lifted at that time. However, that was not what happened. The cat-and-mouse game between the Iraqi authorities and the inspectors mandated by the Security Council has benefited no one, least of all international peace and security, which have been put at risk on more than one occasion.

Bulgaria is categorical that only a frank and honest dialogue between the Security Council and Iraq can alleviate existing tensions. My country calls on Iraq fully to cooperate with the Security Council and to abide fully, unconditionally and without delay by the Council's resolutions.

Among Iraq's obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, those relating to the destruction of weapons of mass destruction are an undeniable priority for the international community. Our debate has once again made this clear.

Yesterday the representative of Iraq said — as did the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs in the General Assembly almost a month ago — that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. Let us take the Iraqi authorities at their word. If that is the case, nothing should stop them from providing immediate, unconditional and unimpeded access to UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors, to all sites that the latter deem necessary and to all organizations and individuals that the inspectors might wish to question, under the conditions that they deem necessary for the fulfilment of their task.

One very important aspect of the Iraqi question — a human aspect — is Iraq's non-compliance with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions regarding the return of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, Kuwait property and the Kuwaiti national archives, as well as the resumption of Iraq's participation in the work of the Tripartite Commission, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Bulgaria takes this opportunity to reiterate its appeal to Iraq to comply with these resolutions.

Given the difficult history of relations between Iraq and the Security Council, it is clear that UNMOVIC will not be able to complete its work without a stronger and clearer mandate. This mandate can emanate only from a new Security Council resolution. My country is prepared to work for the adoption of such a resolution as soon as possible.

Bulgaria is firmly convinced that a peaceful solution to the problem of disarming Iraq is possible. The road to peace is certainly narrow; it is not easy and has obstacles of all kinds, but it does exist. At the end of the road is the lifting of sanctions against Iraq and the lasting normalization of the situation in that country and throughout the region.

Aware of its obligations under Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations as an elected member of the Security Council, my country will make a constructive contribution to the settlement of the problem of the disarmament of Iraq. Bulgaria is prepared to work together with the other members of the Council to find a solution to this problem that is in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. We all have heard the appeal of the Secretary-General, who reminded us that only unity in the Security Council can enable us to send a strong and clear message to Iraq so that it will fully comply with the relevant Council resolutions. My country unreservedly supports this appeal. Bulgaria believes that in the current situation, the unity of the Council is at the heart of its approach and of its action.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): During this two-day debate, there has been a very rich and much-needed exchange of views on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. We welcome the participation in this debate of such a large number of countries from the general membership. This was a clear indication of the wish of the membership to see this issue discussed within this multilateral setting. We thank the representative of South Africa, who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, requested this meeting. Mauritius fully supported this request.

We have noted a convergence of views on several important points, and one on which there is complete unanimity is the fact that Iraq must dispose of all of its weapons of mass destruction in compliance with Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999).

Following the adoption of resolution 687 (1991), Iraq ought to have completely disposed of its weapons of mass destruction and inspectors ought to have been allowed to complete their work. However, by choosing to reject the return of United Nations inspectors and by using other delaying tactics, Iraq defied the

international community and the authority of the Security Council. Such defiance has not helped either the Government of Iraq or the people of Iraq, who continue to live under the regime of United Nations-imposed sanctions. Yet the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) made significant progress, and if resolution 1284 (1999) had been duly complied with, the situation today could have been altogether different.

The almost four-year absence of United Nations inspectors has not only caused a serious break and delay in resolving the whole issue of the disarmament of Iraq in the area of weapons of mass destruction, but has intensified the uncertainties regarding the actual state of the Iraqi programme of weapons of mass destruction. With its delaying and evasive tactics, Iraq has created greater doubts and suspicions about its possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Admittedly, Iraq is not the only country with regard to which the issue of the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction arises, and we certainly support all actions aimed at eliminating all such weapons throughout the world. But on the basis of past actions by Iraq, the Security Council has determined that Iraq's possession of such weapons constitutes a real threat to international peace and security. It is therefore imperative that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction be completely destroyed.

Notwithstanding the track record of Iraq, we are pleased that there has been a positive evolution in the Iraqi position in the last few weeks. Following the intervention of the Secretary-General and Arab States, and appeals from the international community, Iraq has been persuaded to accept the return of United Nations inspectors. We welcome the decision of the Government of Iraq to accept the unconditional return of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). We also welcome the outcome of the recent talks in Vienna between, on the one hand, Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and, on the other, the Iraqi authorities. We also note with satisfaction that agreements have been reached on a wide range of issues pertaining to the modalities and practical arrangements for the return of inspectors.

Iraq must now stand by its engagement. It must fully respect the commitment it has undertaken. We appeal to the Iraqi Government to extend its full cooperation with the inspection teams. Iraq must understand that if it is to provide all the necessary cooperation and information required by UNMOVIC, it will enable the Council to lay this matter to rest and review the sanctions regime imposed on the country. The return of the inspectors to Iraq is in the interests of all, especially the Government and the people of Iraq.

As many delegations have pointed out, on a purely legal basis no new resolution is necessary for the return of the inspectors. However, if in its collective wisdom the Council feels that the inspection regime needs to be reinforced in order to provide greater clarity and, inter alia, to give inspectors immediate and unfettered access to all sites, including presidential sites, as well as to ensure Iraqi cooperation, Mauritius will give careful and positive consideration to such an initiative, which we believe should take into account the principles and objectives of the Charter, including respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq and for the dignity of the Iraqi people.

It will also be important for such a resolution to enjoy the full support of the Council as a whole, since, as we all know, the Council's action is most effective when it acts in unison. It is our expectation that Iraq will fully cooperate with the inspectors and comply with any such resolution that the Council might adopt.

Mauritius considers it important that UNMOVIC resume its activities in Iraq as soon as possible. Exactly one month has elapsed since Iraq expressed its readiness to allow, without any conditions, a United Nations inspection team into Iraq. We should not be perceived as delaying the process. Instead, all efforts need to be made to expedite the departure of UNMOVIC and the IAEA with clear and defined mandates. Here, let me express my delegation's full support for and confidence in Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. ElBaradei, who, guided by the principles of professionalism, independent vigour, impartiality and transparency, will carry out their task with efficiency and credibility. We should avoid prejudging the effectiveness of their work, as well as that of their respective multinational and independent teams. Nor should we – as the Permanent Representative of Singapore said – try to micromanage them and their teams.

It is equally important that Iraq also address all the outstanding issues pertaining to Kuwaiti prisoners of war and the return of Kuwaiti property, as well as the question of missing third party nationals, so that there can be a complete normalization of relations between Iraq and its neighbour.

As much as it is important for Iraq to comply with Security Council resolutions and to cooperate with weapons inspectors, it is equally important that in the event of any non-compliance, the Security Council retain its centrality and authority in deciding the most appropriate course of action to obtain compliance. There is clearly a strong determination on the part of the international community to enforce compliance. There is equally a strong desire to exhaust all diplomatic efforts in that regard, and Mauritius will continue to support such efforts.

Mauritius has full confidence that in case of non-compliance and on the basis of an appropriate report by Mr. Blix, the Security Council would collectively take the required action in full compliance with the principles of international law, taking into account the geopolitical realities. All of that can be avoided if Iraq takes the right steps.

Mauritius reiterates its view that it is the duty of all United Nations Members to comply with Security Council resolutions, in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter. There should be no exceptions, and the Security Council should show even-handedness and impartiality in dealing with all those who defy its resolutions.

With its immense wealth in agricultural and petroleum, with the qualities of its men, its women and children, with its culture, Iraq can and should have a positive influence on the region and its stability and future. Unfortunately, that is not the case today. Iraq today is at the confluence of all crises.

Our debate over the last two days has confirmed the importance that the United Nations community attaches to questions concerning international peace and security.

Cameroon has noted and shares the twin challenges facing the United Nations of carrying out its peace and security missions, promptly and effectively, and its ongoing concern to ensure that in doing so, its actions are legitimate, credible and transparent.

The problems involved in the question of Iraq very clearly demonstrate this dual concern of the international community.

My delegation notes and condemns that in many ways the Iraqi authorities have not always respected the letter and the spirit of the numerous resolutions adopted by the Security Council, neither on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait nor on the disarmament of Iraq.

Iraq must demonstrate that it does not possess weapons of mass destruction. The challenge of our debate today is precisely the disarmament of Iraq.

Despite some promising actions on Iraq's part, especially since the recent Arab League Summit of March 2002, we must note that crucial problems such as the restitution of Kuwaiti property; Kuwait's veritable national memory, including the national archives; and the return of Kuwaiti and third country nationals, as well as the remains of the deceased, are issues still pending.

Iraq's blatant non-compliance with Council resolutions has been noted by all. It is unacceptable because it undermines the credibility of the United Nations and could pave the way for an undesirable and very harmful unilateralism, which could plunge us into relations governed by the law of the jungle and displace us from our organized world based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Today's debate, going beyond the important question of disarming Iraq through United Nations inspections, poses questions of principle. I would like to talk about two such principles. The first and most important is the obligation of every United Nations Member State to comply unconditionally and without delay with the decisions of the Security Council. The other, which is linked to the first, is the Council's obligation to act quickly and fairly in deciding the measures it deems necessary, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Coming back specifically to the need to see Iraq without the proscribed weapons — biological, chemical or nuclear — my country is in favour of an immediate and unconditional resumption of inspections for the disarmament of Iraq by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Iraqi position, as found in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General dated 16 September 2002, indicates considerable progress; it is a large step in the right direction by Iraq, in keeping with what is demanded of it by the Council.

It is the interest of all that the inspections be carried out in strict respect of the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially resolutions 1284 (1999) and 687 (1991).

We all believe that Iraq question is the one of greatest interest to the international community. The international community's expectations contain two hopes: that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction and that the world will not wake up tomorrow to a widespread military conflagration.

Those hopes create an extraordinary responsibility for the inspection teams led by Mr. Blix, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC and Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of IAEA.

For that reason, Cameroon believes that it would be highly useful for the Council to reaffirm in a new resolution its firm and total support for Hans Blix and his colleagues at UNMOVIC, as well as for the teams of IAEA, before their departure for Iraq.

This new resolution is therefore more a political opportunity — just as is our present public meeting — than a legal necessity.

Beyond reiterating firm support for the inspectors, the new resolution must define once again the practical details of the inspections so as to remove any ambiguities that have arisen on the question. The effectiveness of the inspections depends on it. Also, the resolution must clearly indicate that the Council will take the appropriate measures if it observes once again that Iraq does not respect its decisions. The resolution must, in addition, without prejudice to Iraq's conduct, contain provisions foreseeing the possibility of suspending or even removing all relevant sanctions, if Iraq meets all the Council's demands.

Demonstrating the consensus of the large United Nations family, this resolution must be a message of support for the inspectors, but also and especially a message of firmness to Iraq.

On behalf of Cameroon, I would like to invite the Iraqi authorities, as they have already committed to do, to cooperate fully with the inspectors who will soon be deployed to Iraq. It is the only way for Iraq to prove its sincerity and good faith and to spare the world one more conflict, which would only exacerbate the suffering of the Iraqi people, who are the main if not the sole victims of the procrastinations and posturing which have been frequent in this episode in the history of international relations over the last 12 years. Iraq, then, could reassume the vocation contained in its name: a country of water, a country of life.

It is clear that one more refusal by Iraq to comply with the Security Council's requirements would be one refusal too many, because the Council would then have to take appropriate measures to ensure compliance with its decisions, in accordance with the provisions of Article 42.

I appeal to Council members to remain united, given the grave circumstances, and to show confidence in our body to resolve this issue, this crisis, and to do so in a consensual fashion.

I am pleased to note that during the consultations, all Council members, bar none, clearly assured me that they would undertake nothing against Iraq without the Council's explicit approval. Therefore, I have good reason to remain particularly optimistic.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The Permanent Observer of Palestine has asked to make another statement. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving us a second opportunity to address the Council.

A few moments ago, the representative of Israel gave a lengthy and rather strange intervention, discussing, in the first place, essential matters unrelated to the issue at hand. Secondly, he gave false legal arguments, false interpretations of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and of Security Council resolutions. Thirdly, he attempted to falsify Israel's record in non-compliance with the Council's resolutions, accusing many speakers and launching unjustified accusations. This is why we find ourselves obliged to reply to his intervention.

The representative of Israel tried to say that there is a difference in the nature of the resolutions pursuant to Chapter VII and those pursuant to Chapter VI of the

Charter. He went so far as to say that the resolutions adopted pursuant to Chapter VI are mere recommendations. Of course, we do admit that there is a difference in the fact that there is an enforcement mechanism pursuant to Chapter VII. But to attempt to give the impression that some resolutions are binding and others are not is legally false and should be condemned, because this is an attempt to falsify one of the Charter's principles. Article 25 is extremely clear, and all Security Council resolutions are binding.

Israel is the only State in the United Nations that has been recognized by the Security Council as an occupation Power. It is the only State within the United Nations that continues an active colonialist process in the twenty-first century, now that the entire world has practically eliminated colonialism — or most of it.

The record is quite clear. Since the beginning of Israeli occupation in 1967, the Council has adopted 37 resolutions related to Israeli practices in the occupied territories. Thirty-seven resolutions, Mr. President, that deal only with Israeli practices in the occupied territories. They do not include resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), or Israeli practices in southern Lebanon; nor do they include the peacekeeping operations. These 37 resolutions deal only with Israeli practices in the occupied territories.

Among the resolutions in question, there are 27 that reaffirm the Fourth Geneva Convention and call on occupation forces to respect the Convention. What has happened? Israel continues to violate the terms of the Geneva Convention, one serious violation after the other, including collective punishment and, recently, war crimes.

Among the resolutions in question, some relate to the displaced Palestinian people, not the refugees, but the displaced people of the 1967 war. What was the result? Israel refused to implement the resolutions, and there are now 700,000 displaced Palestinians. Israel has not allowed a single one back.

Among the resolutions in question are those concerning the illegal Israeli practices and the attempt to change the legal and demographic nature of Al-Quds, resolutions which considered the law concerning Al-Quds null and void and asked Israel to put a stop to such practices. What was the result? Israel continued violating the resolutions and pursued the Judaization of the city, insisting on referring to it as the capital of Israel.

Among the resolutions in questions are those concerning the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories that called upon Israel to put a stop to these settlements, and even to dismantle them. What was the result? Israel pursued its settlers' colonialism and over the years transferred 400,000 Israelis into the occupied territories. The settlements now dominate and occupy 40 per cent of our occupied territories.

Among the resolutions in question are those concerning the extradition of certain Palestinians, asking Israel to put a stop to this practice, but Israel has continued this practice until very recently. There are resolutions calling for the protection of Palestinian civilians and resolutions calling for investigations by the Council itself. The Council set up a committee for this purpose, but Israel refused to receive it.

The latest Security Council resolution, 1405 (2002), was to develop accurate information regarding recent events perpetrated by Israel in the Jenin refugee camp through a fact-finding team. What was the result? Again, the answer is very clear.

So, as we can see, it is a matter not only of what took place in recent months, but also of systematic policies that Israel has carried out for the past 35 years, in blatant violation of 37 Security Council resolutions, not to mention international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, the entire life of the Palestinian people has been destroyed: their land has been stolen and their houses have been demolished; they have been deprived of their fundamental rights, of their State and of the right to return to their land.

There is no other example of this kind in the world today. It is unprecedented in the history of the United Nations, and yet the Israeli representative says that there are no double standards. Why did the Security Council not try to enforce compliance with its resolutions? Why did the Council accept Israel's blatant defiance of the Council and even its disrespect for that body? Why were no measures undertaken, pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter, to enforce compliance with and respect for Council resolutions? We know the reason, and I shall not dwell on it now. But it undoubtedly constitutes a double standard. I do not believe that there is anyone in the Arab region, or perhaps in the entire world, who does not know that.

I shall reiterate what I said this morning. What we need today from the Security Council is a more serious attitude, in conformity with the Charter, that will

convey the right message: that there is only one standard, based on international law and the provisions of the Charter. Then, and only then, will the entire Arab region be prepared to fully heed the Security Council and to implement its resolutions in all areas.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Iraq has requested the opportunity to make a second statement.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank everyone who has participated in this debate. It has certainly further developed discussion on the issue of Iraq, and I believe that it has been very useful to the Council, to the rest of the United Nations and to the world.

This important and serious debate has been held to offset significant efforts that have sought to mislead public opinion. I should like to thank all those who have made statements that have faithfully described reality, because before now reality had been revealed only in part. The time called for the debate was fairly short, and it was quite difficult to acquire all the necessary data from the period since 1999 so that everyone could participate fully in this debate.

I should like to begin my statement where the President left off in his statement, when he spoke about the Sumerian, Babylonian and Akkadian civilizations in Iraq — Iraq, the land of water, oil and minds, the Iraq of the Abbassid civilization. Even without oil or water, would we have experienced the situation that we are now experiencing? I shall not dwell on a political analysis of this issue. The Council is fully aware that the only objectives of the approaching war are oil, wealth and hegemony — control over the wealth in the region and the world. I shall not go into detail. I shall say only that the world is now split into two and that the larger part favours peace, negotiations and diplomacy under the Charter of the United Nations, unity in the United Nations and the very future of the Organization.

I am definitely in that camp. I fervently desire peace, understanding and conciliation, and I care about the future of this international Organization. It was recently jeopardized by the statement of one major Power that, if the United Nations failed to take into account the interests of that State, it would go its own way. It was not Iraq that made that statement, it was another major Power that feels it has immense power in the world. It was the National Security Adviser who made that statement. It seemed that we had nearly written the Organization's epitaph.

We ourselves support those who believe in peace, diplomacy, understanding, the implementation of resolutions adopted by the United Nations and the provisions of the Charter. I should like to thank and pay tribute to all those who have spoken to that effect. But while we were engaged in this debate, we witnessed a major event that nearly amounted to a declaration of war, aimed at striking Iraq, although a debate was being held here. It was a virtual declaration of war. War legislation was adopted and celebrated with great pomp and ceremony by the President and the leaders of a certain country, and it was against Iraq, a small country thousands of kilometres away from that superpower, which is the primary Power in the world today. It is my hope that that country's President and his colleagues, who celebrated that declaration of war in the form of legislation, have all heard what has been said in this debate by those who favour peace and security.

I said earlier that the world has been split into two, one part favouring peace and the other part — which is actually a very small minority, but an extremely active minority, made up of virtually two States — favouring war. But I wonder: how can a State go along with the warlike approach of another State? The representative of one State said here that if the Council does not take a decision, then his State will act as it sees fit. The text of his statement has been photocopied and is available to Council members. Its message is clear: if the Council refuses to declare war on Iraq, then that State will do it for the Council. That was one voice in this debate.

I am, however, happy to see that the majority of the members of the United Nations are still anxious to preserve peace, the rights of peoples and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as principles that I myself have advocated, and have in fact taught for 30 years in this very country. Those principles are nevertheless being trampled underfoot on a daily basis in our world.

Like others who have spoken in the Security Council today, and indeed like the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations, I believe that it is necessary to preserve the credibility of the United Nations in order to guarantee its future. I can assure the Council that it will certainly not be Iraq that will undermine or weaken the Organization.

Rather, we will work tirelessly to restore the credibility of the United Nations, which has been called into question, not by small countries like my own but by some major Powers.

Many speakers, members and non-members of the Council alike, have expressed their trust in Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei. Indeed, the Government of Iraq also has full confidence in those two gentlemen. Our doors are wide open to them and to their inspectors. Let them come as soon as possible; they will be quite welcome in Iraq. Our doors are widen open, as are our palaces, houses, hospitals and schools. Let them come and go where they wish. As I say, our doors are wide open to them. We are not afraid. We are open to Mr. Blix, Mr. ElBaradei and their inspectors. They are welcome to send the inspectors on 19 October, which is just a couple of days away. Let them come to Iraq, where they will be welcomed and where they and their teams will be able to go where they wish. That is our position regarding Mr. Blix. We have trust in him.

Actually, though, why do we have to reconfirm our trust in Mr. Blix? When has there ever been any question about our confidence in him? Who raised the issue of their being any doubt about him? I do not think anyone has questioned him. In order to be able to explain the evolution of events we therefore have to look back to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and Mr. Butler, who was entrusted with the task of leading UNSCOM. There had been some rumours here and there about Mr. Butler in the past, but we are now talking about Mr. Blix and the need to have confidence in him. However, let me reassure the Council that Iraq has full trust in Mr. Blix and that he and his team will be welcomed in Iraq.

Some speakers have said that Iraq has violated all of the Security Council's resolutions. That assertion is perhaps due to the rather frightening lack of familiarity with UNSCOM documents. It has also been said that Iraq expelled UNSCOM and the inspectors in 1998. However, as everyone in fact knows, Mr. Butler was receiving his orders directly from the United States and the United Kingdom, which were constantly urging him to leave Iraq. Those calls were in fact sufficient to get him to leave Iraq. As the representative of the Russian Federation pointed out, Iraq was bombed 24 hours after Mr. Butler's departure. I would invite everyone who is not familiar with those events to look into the dossier on this case and to familiarize themselves with its contents.

I have spoken about the number of meetings held and about the amount of time spent on inspections and in Iraqi airspace, so I need not repeat that now. Neither Mr. Ikeus nor Mr. Butler nor the inspection teams were able to point to a single element that could indicate the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq — apart, of course, from the information provided by Iraq. Iraq destroyed the weapons it had, opened up its doors and provided copious documentation. Iraq was therefore acting in good faith and with good will. Iraq itself took the decision to reject weapons of mass destruction. I think that the fact that we have welcomed the return of inspectors is further evidence of that rejection. We fully and forever turned our back on weapons of mass destruction and we destroyed them.

The representative of Norway has expressed some apprehension about Iraqi weapons reaching his country. I do not know the distance between Iraq and Norway, but I would like to reassure him that our hands are now clean and that there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Everything that has been said about the issue of weapons of mass destruction has been part of a disinformation campaign. We hope that inspectors will return soon so that they themselves can tell the international community that Iraq's hands are now clean and that it has no weapons of mass destruction. Iraq has no such materials. I just wanted to reassure anyone who still has any doubts about this as a result of that disinformation campaign.

I would like to thank some of my colleagues, including members of the Council, and especially the representative of Singapore, who have said that sanctions will be lifted once the inspectors return to Iraq and they report to the Security Council that there are no weapons of mass destruction in my country. The Iraqi people would then get some relief. I fear that they are being too optimistic, however. American and British individuals have made clear statements to the effect that sanctions and the embargo will never be lifted until there has been "regime change" in Iraq. In fact, those statements are documented and are available to the Council and the Secretary-General. Everyone knows about documents containing such statements. This is a domestic political issue pertaining to the interests of the United States and the United Kingdom. We have said that we are willing to welcome inspectors. But there is also the question of lifting the

embargo, which, as I have also said, is a political matter for those two countries.

Several speakers have also referred to the memorandum of understanding to say that Iraq had not facilitated its implementation. However, although we had billions or tens of billions of dollars in a trust fund, about 2,000 contracts for medicines and medical supplies were pending due to a hold by the United States. Those contracts also included equipment necessary to provide drinking water and to produce food for the people of Iraq. We have lost untold thousands of people as a result of the lack of drinking water and foodstuffs. In fact, the United States even banned the export of chlorine to Iraq, which is essential to treating drinking water. There are many other examples, but I shall not go into them.

The representative of the United Kingdom said that he was really distressed about the situation of the Iraqi people. They can well say that they have nothing against our people, only against the Iraqi Government. There were four billion dollars available in the fund that could have been used had it not been for the veto by the United States and the United Kingdom.

In respect to contractors, 2,000 contracts were stopped. I heard a colleague mention the lack of money in the fund. There are really four reasons for that, but the central one is that the United States and the United Kingdom imposed a retroactive pricing mechanism for our oil. In other words, if I want to buy Iraqi oil today, I sign a contract, then the United States and the United Kingdom say that I have to wait for a month before a price can be quoted. Naturally, one does not want to conclude such a contract, because oil prices are so volatile. That was a deliberate policy of these two countries to thwart the memorandum of understanding and make sure that it could not work. In the past, the mechanism worked. Hopefully things will soon improve again, and so will the situation of the fund.

Those who are shedding crocodile tears for the Iraqi people have also made statements relating to war and destruction, as has been reported widely in the Western and United States media.

There was another point made by several speakers. I am not sure whether I should mention it, but I would like to make one point in connection with it. That is the question of some Kuwaiti property — some, I stress — that is about to be returned to the owners as per Iraqi-Kuwaiti arrangements. I recognize what was said about the Kuwaitis and their wish to get their property back without any problems whatsoever, a matter that I appreciate. Another representative spoke of the matter and tried to politicize the issue.

Before concluding, I would like to mention the agreement between Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei on the one hand, and Iraqi authorities on the other. We have heard a lot in the media about this. Both yesterday and today, here at this meeting, some supporters of the American position said that the agreement between Iraq and Mr. Blix had only just been signed and Iraq was already looking for another margin or space as delaying tactics, seeking other interpretations in order to deprive the agreement of any significant meaning or content whatsoever.

Iraq approved and signed the agreement in Vienna and is bound by all its provisions. We even issued an official communiqué inviting the inspectors to return to Iraq and undertook to fully cooperate with them. We are willing to work and resolve any problems that occur. We are confident that the inspectors will face no impediments in carrying out their work. I would like to give assurances that any doubt cast on this agreement is inaccurate. In an exchange of letters it is quite natural that there be some misunderstanding about the actual meaning of words, but that is all there is.

On the substance of what was agreed on in Vienna, I affirm that there is no misunderstanding as to what was agreed there, and we will not in any way hinder the work of the weapons inspectors. I believe that we are all civilized persons, as you all said. We have a history that covers several civilizations and millennia.

Many who participated in this debate noted that goodwill is present and that we will cooperate with UNMOVIC. So I would like to say that the new resolution being spoken of in the media and in negotiations about its text — the contents of which we do not know — will not be about ensuring that UNMOVIC and the inspectors do their work, but rather will prevent the inspectors from doing their work. We urge the inspectors to come tomorrow or the day after to do their work. We will create no problems.

Of course some say that this is just rhetoric, but I say that I am not an experienced diplomat familiar with all these rhetorical flourishes. I speak as an Iraqi who is sincere in my intention. The United Nations does not

need another resolution. That is my view, though I know that it will not change the views of the superpower. But I want to ensure all the peace-loving countries that reject war that the new text is geared towards preventing the inspectors from returning to Iraq. We want them to come and do their work, and we are resolved to implement the resolution in spirit and in letter.

I thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving me this right of reply to comment on what has been said by other speakers in this debate.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon, who has asked to speak again. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor once again and for giving me the opportunity to respond to what was mentioned in the statement by Israel, containing lies and false claims.

The Israeli representative claimed that his Government has implemented resolution 425 (1978) in compliance with international legitimacy. Everyone knows that Israel has continued to occupy southern Lebanon for 22 years in flagrant defiance of that resolution and would not have withdrawn had it not been for the heroic Lebanese resistance and the complete support of the Government of Lebanon.

Lebanese resistance of Israel would never have arisen had it not been for Israel's refusal to implement resolution 425 (1978) throughout the 22 years of its occupation of southern Lebanon. On the basis of the narrow political interests of one member of the Security Council, the Security Council failed to compel Israel to implement a single one of its resolutions through those 22 years, leading to the death of thousands of Lebanese civilians and to widespread destruction of our infrastructure, from which we continue to suffer to this day.

We should like to remind the representative of Israel that his Government continues to hold many Lebanese in Israeli prisons. Some have been detained for over 25 years without trial, in contravention of all the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War. We also wish to remind him that his Government remains in contravention of resolution 425 (1978) through the daily violations by the occupying Israeli forces of Lebanon's sovereign airspace and waters. These violations have been described by the Secretary-General as provocations that have become a routine fact of life. In any case, the Security Council still considers Israel to be the only occupying Power in the world. Israel also continues to occupy Arab territories, including the Lebanese Sheba'a Farms, destabilizing the entire region.

The Arab peoples are peace-loving peoples, as amply demonstrated by the peace initiative of the Beirut Summit, which offered Israel total peace in return for its implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and its withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. Israel's response to that initiative was its reoccupation of the West Bank. If Israel truly desires peace, it must now implement the scores of resolutions of international legitimacy adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Security Council must also shoulder its responsibilities, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, by compelling Israel to implement its resolutions in the interests of peace and security in the region and to eschew any double standards in the implementation of its resolutions that allow Israel to shirk its obligations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Israel has asked to speak. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): If Israel has felt it useful to speak in this discussion, it is basically to resist the thoughtless intermingling of ideas that lumps Iraq and Israel in the same category of offender with respect to the implementation of Security Council resolutions.

We wish to express our disagreement with regard to Iraq by retracing a very evocative illustration of Security Council resolutions on peace between Israel and its Arab and Palestinians neighbours. It will be said, as was done a few moments ago by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, that beyond the principal resolutions — resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) — there is a series of other resolutions, touching on various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, that require implementation. Undoubtedly, such resolutions exist, but their existence is so bound

up in the context of earnest and responsible implementation that they are at the very heart of negotiations with the Palestinians. The final status of Jerusalem, along with the question of refugees, the issue of settlements and the definitive shape of the borders of the Palestinian State are inscribed in the framework of the final status stipulated in the Oslo accords.

It should be noted once again that the Permanent Observer of Palestine continues to be obsessed, in defending and elaborating his argument, with forcing a one-dimensional reading of the resolutions of the Security Council that he cited earlier. For the Permanent Observer of Palestine, those resolutions concern Israel alone, while the Palestinians may ignore them with impunity. Have we heard the Permanent Observer of Palestine say a single word about the need, as stipulated in those resolutions, to end the suicide attacks and Palestinian terrorism in all its forms, or to declare a genuine ceasefire between Israelis and Palestinians? This is a slew of Palestinian obligations with which the most recent series of Security Council resolutions is replete and which the Palestinians seem to ignore with easy disdain.

It is essential that we differentiate between resolutions adopted, on the one hand, under Chapter VI with respect to Israel and its partners in peace, and those adopted under Chapter VII with respect to Iraq, on the other. We must declare null and void indictments based on false linkages. Neither the Arab party concerned — I refer to Syria — nor the Palestinian side can set itself up as sole and selective master decoder of resolutions whose inconvenient provisions they trample underfoot, only to play the role of inspector of works undertaken and completed by Israel.

Negotiations and reciprocity in the implementation of Security Council resolutions are the cornerstone of the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian dialogue. Thus, the offhand association of Israel with Iraq is nothing more than a dangerous distraction that plays into the hands of an unscrupulous dictatorship.

I know that reference to Israel as a democracy, howsoever imperfect its need to survive and its dedication to peace, occasionally stirs up emotions in certain quarters. The representative of Syria engaged with vigour in the ritual denigration of Israeli democracy, no doubt because he himself is steeped in a staunch Syrian democracy. His republic is run in flawless republican order, including the transmission of power from father to son, or, more precisely, from one generation to the next.

The representative of Syria is revolted by Israel as a democracy of occupation. I would remind that revolted democrat that the Israeli occupation, a result of Arab aggression, is at least, negotiable. I would recall that it was negotiated with Egypt and Jordan, to the satisfaction of all parties.

But can the same be said of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon? Is it pursued on behalf of Syrian democracy? What hope is there for Lebanon? Is there going to be a day when the Syrian democrats, professional enslavers, will restore the Lebanese people their freedom? Where is, then, the lost resolution of the Security Council that will one day invite one of its members — I would say the most unusual one, in his dual guise as occupier and member of this Council — to finally negotiate its withdrawal from Lebanon.

That is the question that Syria must respond to before this Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked to make another statement. I give the floor to him.

Mr. Mekdad (Syria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I believe that the Council and the speakers who have spoken during the past two days — and, if I am right, more than 90 per cent of them — have spoken very clearly. This Council should not in any way deal in double standards.

Everyone who spoke at this meeting referred in one way or another to Israel. Israel has not only spoiled the situation in the Middle East, but has also undermined the legal framework of collective endeavours on the international scene. I believe that the logic used by the representative of Israel condemns him first and foremost. Occupation is rejected under any pretext. It is a shame that someone comes to this Council to defend occupation.

I can hardly believe that I am at the Security Council in the midst of international legitimacy, the edifice of international legitimacy. When I listen to such false claims, lies, misrepresentations and ridiculous statements, I remember how the world has judged Israel as an aggressor, an occupier of other

peoples territories and as an outlaw, an international outlaw.

When we speak of democracy, and we spoke a while ago about the real Israeli democracy, which is a democracy of killing, occupation, destruction, and the oppression of all the States of the region with weapons of mass destruction that everyone has said should be destroyed as well.

The other issue that I would like to mention is that the Israeli regime is a blood-thirsty regime by any standard. It exercises State terrorism. Today, it directed its tanks to bombard Rafah and killed 8 Palestinians. Last week, they bombed Gaza and killed almost 18 innocent civilians, including many innocent children. After all that, the representative of Israel dares to speak of democracy. What kind of democracy is that? The statement by the representative of Israel is a danger to democracy and an affront to Israel. Democracy for some and not everyone has been condemned by the entire world.

The racist regime in South Africa pretended that it was a democratic regime. It held elections. But this Council attacked the racist regime in South Africa for many years until it was eliminated. Incidentally, one of the very few countries in the world that cooperated with the racist regime in South Africa, as well as those in Namibia and Zimbabwe, was Israel, whose representative speaks about democracy. Israel ceased cooperation with the racist regime in South Africa only after that regime was totally eliminated. This is a fact that everyone knows. And I do not need to recall it here now. This is Israeli democracy.

What exactly are we talking about in this Council? When we say that we want peace, we are faced with tanks and jet fighters and artillery fire that kill our people. When we ask for a comprehensive and just peace, we are told that it will not be achieved unless Israel annexes all the occupied Arab territories.

Democracy should come from within. It should be the main feature of relations among nations and at the international level as well. The State farthest from democracy is Israel.

My country has its own democracy. We have elections at all levels. During the next few days we will witness the holding of elections of the Syrian Parliament, free and democratic elections, such as those held in any country in the world. But the biggest lie that was uttered by the representative of Israel is the one regarding Lebanon.

There is no other country in the world that speaks more about Lebanese-Syrian ties than Israel. This Council is the world. Is there a single representative in this Council or outside that speaks more about Lebanon-Syria than the Israeli representative? The country that is most concerned about the unity, integrity and independence of Lebanon and the liberation of its territory that is still under occupation is Syria. The country that is most concerned with the best Lebanese Government that controls the situation in its own country is Syria. But the reason why the Syrian forces went into Lebanon is another issue. Lebanon went through an extremely destructive civil war, such as the wars that took place in the Balkans and in many African countries. The international community deployed tremendous efforts before Syria got involved in Lebanon in order to solve the situation, but those efforts were all futile.

One million Lebanese were forced to go to Syria during the escalation of the Lebanese civil war. When all the Lebanese forces and all the political parties in Lebanon appealed to Syria to intervene, when Syria received a formal request from the Lebanese Government, to save the people and Government of Lebanon, Syria intervened. There are agreements between Syria and Lebanon on this Syrian military presence in Lebanon that protects national reconciliation and preserves the unity and integrity of Lebanon at the request of the legitimate Lebanese Government. Syria is prepared, as agreed with the Lebanese Government, to consider its presence in Lebanon in accordance with the wishes of the legitimate Government in Lebanon. And it is a legitimate Government, as we know. Israel has not recognized that Government, but that is Israel's problem.

I would also like to ask, is there a single Government in the entire world that does not recognize the present Lebanese Government? It seems that this is only an Israeli problem. It shows the dissatisfaction of Israel with what has been accomplished through cooperation between brothers in Syria and Lebanon. The Syrian youth who died in Lebanon number in the thousands and all the Lebanese in all strata of Lebanese society are grateful to Syria for the role it has played.

As I just stated, the Syrian presence in Lebanon is governed by agreements between the two Governments, and Syria is prepared to fulfil all requests made by the Lebanese Government, but it is clear that Israel is not pleased when there are such brotherly ties between two Arab countries. That is a problem for Israel. The ties between Lebanon and Syria are those of brotherhood and cooperation and are based on equality and friendly relations among nations. They are based on the wishes of all the different sectors of the Lebanese people.

Israel also has no right to interfere in Lebanese affairs, or to claim to be concerned about Lebanon, because it has killed thousands, I don't want to exaggerate, but Israel has killed at least thousands, if not tens of thousands of Lebanese citizens in the course of three or four invasions of Lebanon that sometimes reached the capital, Beirut. Israel destroyed everything on the ground. This fact is well known to everyone.

I realize that everyone knows the facts, but I only want to make it absolutely clear that the representative of Israel cannot get away with false claims and lies such as these. My colleagues tell me I have spoken at length. I believe that is so and I will stop here.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.